

CATHOLIC



This Issue

ENTER THE DIRECTOR • GOING ABOUT IN CYCLES
"OF EQUAL DUST"—A NEW PLAY • UNDER THE MARQUEE
DOGMA AND THE CATHOLIC PLAY • COLLEGE LABORATORIES

Vol. II • No. III
JANUARY, 1940

THEATRE

Catholic Theatre Conference

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CATHOLIC THEATRE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF

THE CATHOLIC THEATRE CONFERENCE

E. FRANCIS McDEVITT, *Editor*

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COLLEGE LABORATORIES

EXCEPT for certain ascetic souls, praise is seldom a bitter pill to swallow. When laudation is deserved, it can be a legitimate tonic to the heart and mind and will. Thus we must confess to a certain satisfaction in the tribute paid by Mrs. Hallie Flanagan, erstwhile Director of the defunct Federal Theatre Project and currently Director of Theatre Research at Vassar College, to Catholic colleges of the United States for their enterprise in the utilization of new theatre techniques.

Mrs. Flanagan, in addressing the National Theatre Conference in New York, referred to the adoption of the Living Newspaper device by some Catholic colleges as the sort of progressive action which will broaden the base of the inevitable theatre of tomorrow. She cited and commended Fordham's stream-lined version of Edmund Campion's life—"Who Ride on White Horses"—and gave special mention to the application of the Living Newspaper method, by Holy Cross College, Worcester, Mass., to dramatize historic themes and passages in the papal encyclicals. Mrs. Flanagan could have mentioned the Catholic University of Amer-

ica, Rosary College, DePaul University, Mundelein College and a score of others engaged in theatrical experimentation and been equally close to the truth. However, what concerns us at the moment is the stress laid by Mrs. Flanagan upon the experimental phase of Catholic college dramatic activity. This laboratory aspect of the College Theatre is by far its most important in the larger picture of Catholic Theatre if we bear in mind the conception of Catholic Theatre as a progressively integrated movement, in which the component parts have definite functions in relation to one another and to the ultimate end, namely, a theatre unified as to moral, artistic and technical standards.

What more logical than that the Catholic college, in addition to being a training ground for future leaders in the arts, sciences, philosophy and religion, should be busy in the work of developing American culture? What could be more fitting than that the college, as a center of scholarship and research, should also assume a large place as a laboratory for the theatre? As Mrs. Flanagan has discovered, our Catholic institutions of higher learning already are swinging into

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this avenue of the tributary theatre. Boston College does the premiere of Mr. Lavery's "Second Spring." The Catholic University of America writes, stages and exploits a brand-new musical play based on the life of George M. Cohan. Fordham brings forth another original play, student-authored, dealing with the life of Blessed Edmund Campion. These are brave ventures that few Parish, Little Theatre or other adult groups would dare to undertake, perhaps rightly and wisely enough, since a modicum of box office determines the very existence of these segments of Catholic Theatre.

Such invasions into the shadowy land of the new and untried are praiseworthy, eminently fitting and ultimately effective in advancing the efforts of Catholic Theatre to compose a new play tradition. The pity of it is that such experimental endeavors were not at hand

years ago. From the experience and material of such projects Catholic adult drama groups—and these, after all, are the ones that face the public at large—could have drawn drama that long ago would have set in motion the construction of the American Catholic Theatre.

We sincerely hope the college will become an ever-expanding field of experimentation, so that the Adult Theatre can turn to it for proven plays and playwrights as well as for trained players, technicians and directors. Innumerable difficulties impede the Little Theatre or parish group in successfully carrying out a Laboratory Theatre plan. Most of these difficulties do not exist in the college. In this way, the college and adult group can work in further unison to the end of creating and perfecting the new Catholic plays, which are the essence of Catholic Theatre.

COMFORT FOR THE PURIST

IF ANY generalization can be made concerning the current legitimate season on Broadway, it is the friendliness with which producers and public have accepted the technically faulty play. The runs of such vehicles as Saroyan's "The Time of Your Life," Maxwell Anderson's "Key Largo," that tenuous little thing called "Billy Draws a Horse," and the brief "Morning's at Seven" can add fresh fuel to the controversy between the structural purist and the playwriting bohemian. Certainly, it would seem from the aforementioned favorites of Broadway audiences this season that the beloved classroom dicta on play construction, solemnly thundered at the student as the yardstick by which the good play is measured, bear little relationship to professional success. Saroyan writes a play virtually devoid of plot and the public takes it to its heart; Anderson violates a cardinal bookish principle in frequently interrupting action to make way for prolix philosophizing in "Key Largo;" "Billy Draws a Horse" careens dangerously to the side of boredom in long sessions of "talky" dialogue; and "Morning's at Seven" depends precariously, and vicariously, upon incident as a plot basis.

The apparent current affection for such plays undoubtedly is causing some tantalizing moments for the dramatic purist who laboriously plays chess when he fabricates a play. If he be an instructor, he fears the prosperity of such plays might imbue his students with the notion that the classic rules of playwriting do not govern a drama's merit.

Here, of course, is the immortal issue, raising its head in the theatre, between objective principles and an expediency which is sensitive and obedient to every breeze of unstable public fancy and convention. It is well for us to remember that the well-made play, based on ancient principles of art and beauty and philosophy, is the rule, rather than the exception, among those works that have endured; that humanity being what it is, mass taste and attitude are whimsical and fickle, so that everything from the gutter to the sky at some time or another can, and does, enjoy a certain vogue; that a distinction must be made between the play which is worthwhile and that which a professional producer thinks is "terrific;" that the producer, playwright or actor who has established himself in the esteem of the public, for one reason or another, is forgiven lapses much more readily than the tyro, and more often than not, is tolerated in his nodding because of his prestige or excellence in other respects.

Academic diagnosis of play construction is beyond the comprehension and alien to the interest of the mass public, and the playwright who delivers himself of a custom-made drama for the purpose of wooing popular favor may be disappointed in the results. But for the comfort of the author who cherishes some desire for abiding fame, it should be emphasized that the critique of time and the cosmic mind of generations winnow the wheat from the chaff and that works of art based on faulty foundations can not withstand the slings and arrows of the centuries.

(Editorials Continued on Page 14)

ENTER THE DIRECTOR

By WALTER F. KERR

[The ensuing article, by a member of the faculty of the Catholic University of America School of Speech and Drama and both a director and playwright, cogently presents the case of the director in claiming a major share in the creation of Catholic Theatre. It is only too true that preoccupation with the Catholic play as the soul of Catholic Theatre has thrown the full glare of the spotlight upon the playwright. Mr. Kerr's article contributes much toward balancing our thinking on this question of originating an American Catholic theatre tradition, by emphasizing how the director, through technical and interpretative participation in the production of a play, is also building the structure of Catholic Theatre.]

UNLESS I am wrong—and you may take it that I am, since this is appearing in print—the only people who manage to sustain the impression of being consistently right are those who are able to keep their mouths shut—most good people interested in achieving an integrally Catholic drama are waiting around for the playwright to take the first steps. And the playwright, meantime, is sitting apart in his corner, working industriously on his fingernails, and wondering just what under God's ominously grey heaven a Catholic play is.

I am not going to tell him. I am keeping it a secret until 1943, at which time I am going to produce one out of a little black bag reserved for special miracles. But if I can get him off those fingernails come Easter time by taking from his shoulders a part of the creative burden, I am going to. You see, I *like* playwrights.

This, then, is where the director comes in (Down Left, specifically, and tripping over a stage brace). The director has long since been accepted as having a valid artistic relationship to the production of a play, principally as its main force for unity, but why his function should be regarded as exclusively synthetic and critical escapes me. (Lots of things escape me; I need a secretary with a grip like a batten clamp.) The director may easily be as potent a force toward the creation of a unique and clearly defined Catholic drama as the playwright himself.

I hear the rise of a hundred eyebrows. How is the director to help create a kind of play when he hasn't that play to work on? Isn't the director a mere secondary artist, called into being only after the primary playwright has completed the creative work? The answer to that last question is *no*. (Take care of those eyebrows; you'll lose them.) The director, or technical artist, has always been at least fifty years ahead of the dramatist, and, so far as I can see, is in no danger of losing ground. The reason for this, I think, is his preoccupation with method, or, as we may call it analogically, *form*. His interest in a way of doing things, the means toward visual and aural projection, seems to provide him with a greater sense of experimentation.

The playwright, by nature a dull and pedestrian being—as against the director, who is an impudent tyrant; ask any playwright—is generally content to work within the established form of his period. This is true at least in his youth; by maturity he may have met a few designers and technicians. The director is always restless and conniving.

It was thus that realism, the form of the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, came about. A director, or stage manager, or whatever he may have been called locally, first imposed a box-set on a play not written with that in mind. It was a Garrick who first turned his back on an audience. Realism! And a Saxe-Meiningen who instructed his actors to cough and sneeze. Stark realism! And this long before playwright Tom Robertson was to insist that director Tom Robertson have a real fire in his fireplace, or before Ibsen was to make of realism a complete form. And the director may well strike the first blows again.

Now this business of form is very important. (Don't take my word for it; ask anybody who agrees with me.) Considering the matter of a play, its theme or philosophical kernel or narrative base, as its substance, it should be apparent that the manner in which this is expressed, its form, must be harmonious with that substance. "Harmonious" is not even a sufficiently strong word; the two must be, to all practical purposes, identical. That is, matter and form are not actually separable; they are a part of the same organic whole; the form is that one right method of revealing the essence of a play's thought.

It is generally believed the playwright discovers and sets this harmonious form while writing the play. Unfortunately, that is rarely true. The playwright writes a play into a form conditioned by the contemporaneous physical theatre, the director's province. And one of two things may happen: he will either state ideas which fit into that form and successfully achieve a union of the two, or he will try desperately to state ideas antagonistic to the form in the form and fail (hence the difficulties of such pieces as Barry's *Here Come the Clowns* and some of the O'Neill plays.)

As has been said, the form of our time is realistic. This was, at first, a gradual technical growth paralleling the increasing idealization of bourgeois materialism. As more and more importance came to be attached to the furniture, the woodwork and walls of the middle-class home—largely atrocious in the first place—so did the theatre take on more and more of these things as appurtenances. Any art form must reflect the culture which produces it. And as less and less attention came to be paid to the individual soul and the problems of fundamental morality—substituting for these a sentimental and spacious social and mercantile ethic—so did the theatre drift easily away from the themes that had made it great.

By the last half of the Nineteenth Century this had become a philosophy: that of scientific materialism and pessimism, with an emphasis on heredity and environment. It remained only for Zola to apply it to the theatre, for Ibsen and Hauptmann, Pinero and Jones to make the plays. Once you accepted the idea that character was primarily and even exclusively shaped by the three walls around you, the knickknacks in the room, and the glands of your demented grandmother, the thoroughly logical thing to do was to put them on the stage in great detail and let them dominate the actors: to build solid doors and real fireplaces and to hang up your grandmother's picture. Hence realism. And this is our theatre.

The question to be raised is: how does this square with a Catholic review of life? To what extent may a truly Catholic play be achieved within this framework, once it is granted that form and substance must be integral? Isn't it true that the philosophical origins of the form, now disremembered but still subtly and inevitably present, are actually antagonistic to what a Catholic playwright wishes to say? At best, the Catholic is hampered in the medium; at work he is utterly frustrated in trying to reconcile two opposites.

For the Catholic playwright wishes to deal with soul-struggles, the conflicts of will, in man. What he needs is a theatre that will permit him to do this: a theatre in which the material aspects are minimized and the spiritual aspects revealed or suggested by means of all the visual technical devices at hand. This is where the director comes in. It is his job to experiment, to create a form in which man is dominant and sharply outlined, not against the deadening background of a routine, middle-class "interior"—no one is going to achieve a Catholic play by slapping a crucifix on the wall of a box-

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A JUVENILE THEATRE

FOR fourteen years the Jack and Jill players Juvenile Theatre has been playing to youthful theatregoers in Chicago and surrounding suburbs, and as far away as Milwaukee, Waukegan, and Aurora. Marie Agnes Foley founded the theatre to develop a self-supporting juvenile theatre, with all the plays presented for and by children. Beginning with rehearsals in one small room and a tiny theatre, the Jack and Jill Players have so grown in prestige and numbers, that they are about to begin their second season at the nine-hundred-seat Civic Theatre in the Opera Building. Here they play on a modern, well equipped stage, and have access to the million dollars' worth of opera scenery. During the opera season, some of the young people's most enthusiastic followers are the opera stars. All of the actors and actresses in the plays are between the ages of three and eighteen. The plays which they present are dramatizations of well-known children's stories or original plays written especially for young people. During the past seasons these plays have included dramatizations of such stories as: "Nobody's Boy," "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp," "Heidi," "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," "Magic Whistle," "Little Lame Prince," and a young people's version of Shakespeare's "Comedy of Errors."

Many of the young people have gone on professionally with their dramatic work, particularly in the field of radio. Most of the radio directors have recognized the advantage of having young people cast in radio plays who are as nearly as possible the same age as the characters they are portraying. They have also realized that if these young people have had previous stage experience, they will act and live their parts rather than just read them. The result is that nearly all of the child or juvenile characters on the radio in Chicago are acted by Jack and Jill Players.

These youthful actors have also gone into movie work, and to the professional stage. Strangely enough, the young players do not get "star" complexes, for they are all treated alike, whether they are radio stars, or just everyday boys and girls.

But whether the young people who are members of this unusual theatre company go on with theatrical work as a career or not is unimportant to Miss Foley. She feels that the training for leadership they receive is vital to character building no matter what profession they enter and that the development of personalities, with emphasis on good speech, poise, honesty and dependability will stand them in good stead for any career.

GOING ABOUT IN CYCLES

[As promised in a previous issue, we herewith present a comprehensive report of the two Play Cycles held under the aegis of the Catholic Theatre Conference in 1939. The cycle in Chicago, conducted as a regional activity by a specially organized group—the Chicago Catholic Theatre Cycle—under the presidency of Mr. Everett F. Quinn, and that in New York under the direction of Mrs. Euphemia Van Rensselaer Wyatt, Vice-President of the Conference and then New York Regional Chairman, in cooperation with the Conference's Cycle Committee, were pioneering efforts and, as such, left much to be desired so far as ultimate objectives were concerned. However, since much of theatrical achievement generally is attained by the experimental, or trial and error method, these brave ventures in two great metropolitan centers are freighted with lessons for future projects of this kind in New York and Chicago and elsewhere. We publish this account for the guidance of other regions planning Play Cycles sooner or later.]

THE most dynamic result of the biennial convention of the Catholic Theatre Conference, held in Washington last June, was the emphasis placed by that body on Play Cycles as an important element in the resurgence of Catholic art in the theatre. It is the hope of the Conference, during the coming dramatic season, to encourage and sponsor the production of Play Cycles in all of the major dramatic and educational centers of the country.

Last spring, cycles were presented in New York and Chicago and the success of these two ventures, starting as they did "from scratch," without subsidy or previous example, prompted the Cycle Committee of the Theatre Conference to recognize in this form of action a direct and practical method of campaign to renew and perpetuate Catholic tradition in the theatre.

On the evenings of May 6, 7, 8, and 9, 1939, at the Barbizon Plaza Theatre the Catholic colleges of metropolitan New York combined to present the first such cycle, or Drama Festival, under the inspiration of the Catholic Theatre Conference. Although this first attempt was experimental in organization and production, it provided all the elements necessary for Catholic Play Cycles—the creation of a Catholic theatre by means of centralizing the efforts of Catholic amateur theatrical groups.

The undertaking of the project in New York was made possible by the approval of the Most Rev. Stephen J. Donahue, then Administrator of the Archdiocese of New York, and was notably assisted by the presence in New York and the active interest of the Rev. Dr. John H. Mahoney, then President of the Theatre Conference.

Under the leadership of Mrs. Christopher Wyatt, New York Regional Chairman, a first meeting of all the Catholic colleges and universities in New York State was called. It was thought advisable, as a beginning, to limit the productions to college and university groups because they had at hand strongly organized and dependable units for cycle purposes.

The Drama Group of the Carroll Club offered its serv-

ices to Mrs. Wyatt in the preliminary secretarial work involved, and its clubhouse as a meeting place for the representatives.

The response to this new idea of collaboration in a Catholic dramatic program was from the very first most heartening. The first meeting, called in December, 1938, was attended by representatives of St. Rose's, Albany, and Nazareth College, Rochester, as well as all the metropolitan colleges. It was decided, however, that the northern New York colleges could more readily serve the purpose of the Conference by centralizing their activities in a festival in their district.

From the start the selection of plays was held to be of paramount importance. At the meeting in December, Father Mahoney and Emmet Lavery, Chairman of the Cycle Committee, emphasized that upon the selection of plays rested the worth of the cycle. Two groups, St. John's University, Brooklyn, and the College of New Rochelle, immediately submitted "Murder in the Cathedral" and "Cradle Song," respectively, as their choices. These had already been prepared by them and would furnish least difficulty in the repetition.

The cooperation between men's and women's colleges was stressed, and in the final program excellent examples of this collaboration were given by Manhattan College and the College of Mount St. Vincent in "Monsignor's Hour," by the College of St. Elizabeth and St. Peter's College of Jersey City, in "The Far Off Hills," and St. John's University and New Rochelle in "Murder in the Cathedral." In these cases, the production was sponsored by one college: Manhattan, St. Elizabeth, and St. John.

The final program consisted of three full-length and three one-act plays, nine colleges in all participating. Each evening was highlighted by a short speech during intermission. These brief talks by Father Mahoney, Mrs. Wyatt, and Richard Dana Skinner, prominent drama critic, served to emphasize the purpose of players and audience and to unify them in the common goal of a Catholic Theatre.

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A KING'S MENU

MIX original drama, ancient and modern classics, representative national plays, and a heaping share of George M. Cohan, spiced with Robert Speaight, flavor all with Catholicity—and you have a King's Menu and a fair idea of the dramatic pabulum being served this year at the Catholic University of America.

Entering upon the third year of its existence, the Speech and Drama Department at America's pontifical university combines with the undergraduate Harlequins in one of the most elaborate and ambitious schedules ever undertaken by a non-professional producing organization.

Three plays each are offered by the Harlequins and the Graduate Department. The largest project scheduled by the Harlequins was their initial production of the year, the original musical comedy based on the life of the Number One actor of the American theatre, George M. Cohan. With the gracious permission and, in fact, hearty approval of Mr. Cohan himself, Walter Kerr, instructor in playwriting, and Leo (Brother Orchid) Brady, an undergraduate, wrote a tuneful biography entitled "Yankee Doodle Boy," which was played by a cast of Harlequins against a background of the famous Cohan song-hits which have kept the country whistling since before the turn of the century.

The Harlequins' venture into the classics with their second play, Christopher Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus." Third on the undergraduate list, "Calidor," is a Catholic social drama in verse by Mr. Brady.

The graduate students formally opened the university drama season in November with Lennox Robinson's Irish comedy, "The Far Off Hills." The play showed to four audiences of capacity proportions and was hailed as comparable to the Abbey Theatre's original production of the piece by no less authorities than Robert Brennan, Irish Minister to the United States, a faithful patron of the theatre, and Miss Sara Allgood, formerly of the Abbey Players and a member of the original company.

Robert Speaight, prominent English actor and writer, who appeared in "The Comedian" with a student cast as the final production of the last summer session, will return to the university and to his most renowned theatrical role when in March he will appear in T. S. Eliot's widely-acclaimed "Murder in the Cathedral." Mr. Speaight, a veteran of the Old Vic in London and

justly famed in professional circles for the fluency and beauty of his diction, created the role of Thomas a Becket in the initial performance of the poetic classic at the Canterbury Festival and subsequently appeared in the part for over seven hundred performances in England and the United States.

Moliere's fine French comedy, "The Miser," will wind up the graduate program and the season's offerings in a stylized production scheduled for early spring.

Not the least of the problems involved in this program of tried and expected theatre is the designing and execution of the sets. "Yankee Doodle Boy" alone, with its twenty-four scenes, ranging from simple backstage settings to colorful production numbers, was enough to turn Norman Bel Geddes green with envy—and more than enough to prompt a faint-hearted technician to fly from the theatre and its problems. But Ralph Brown, recently of the University of Arizona and previously connected with the Pasadena Playhouse, ably demonstrated his artistic taste and practical capabilities in the matter of suitable settings with his work on the initial production and his current well-turned labors on the musical show.

Students studying in the graduate department for their degree of Master of Arts in the drama include eager-eyed thespians from as far West as Lincoln, Nebraska, and as far North as Ottawa, Canada. Naturally, enough, graduates of colleges in the District of Columbia make up the bulk of the student roster, but other well-known schools represented include Fordham University; Marygrove, of Detroit; Marywood, of Scranton; Yale, the University of Washington, Notre Dame, and Canisius and Hunter Colleges.

The Radio Drama Section of the Speech and Drama Department keeps apace with the theatre activities. Several students in the script-writing class have progressed from their classroom efforts to the point where

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Photos on the right are a pictorial part of Catholic University's drama records. (*Upper left*) This slice of Catholic U.'s production of "Brother Orchid" is a sterling study in emotion projection. (*Upper right*) A glimpse of Henri Gheon's "The Comedian," as produced at Catholic U., showing superbly executed impressionistic staging, enhanced by perfect blending of lighting and setting [Photo by Jordan]. (*Lower*) Focal attention to point the emotionally dominant personality has been eminently achieved by meticulous direction in this scene from the Catholic U. version of Lennox Robinson's "Far Off Hills." [Photo by Jordan].



CATHOLIC REPERTORY DARES

By WALTER F. GIBBONS

[Published in mid-winter, this puckish account of the dramatic venture and adventure of Blackfriars in the field of repertory cites the lessons learned last summer for the benefit of new projects this coming summer. The undertaking dripped with Catholic Theatre and can well serve as the model of an apostolate that depends greatly upon sacrifice, courage, and hard work for success. We present herewith this gay chronicle as an inspiration and a source of hope in the future of Catholic Theatre.]

A TUBE of greasepaints, and a set of flats. A few loose scripts and a handful of mad actors. Mix well, add the leaven of Catholic Theatre, and you have the Blackfriars' Repertory Theatre.

Let us illustrate the history of the recipe. For years the Rev. Urban Nagle, O.P., National Director of the Blackfriars' Guild, has dreamed the most exquisite dreams of a professional company that would live Blackfriarism. Last summer he found it, or rather he conjured it, in his best conjuring spirit—from almost nothing. It happened this way. Word came from the Lowell Chapter of the Blackfriars that the summer theatre of the Nabnassett Country Club, in Westford, Mass., was available. Without capital, without actors, without plays, Father Nagle jumped at the opportunity.

In a few days he gathered a promising company from all parts of the country. He drew up a schedule and through the already incorporated Lowell Chapter contracted to play the season at the Westford theatre.

There was still the little matter of capital, later to become just the least bit troublesome. Just to be different, the Blackfriars' Repertory Company started without capital, hoping that gate receipts would cover operating expenses. It was sheer madness, of course, and they knew it. But they were desperate. There was just the slimmest chance they might come through. They took it.

The company, about twenty-five in number, gathered at Nabnassett about the first of July. A few of the men took up quarters in the little cabins next to the theatre, while everybody else lived in a great house half a mile down the road. Unexpected guests occupied the pool tables in the game room. For the first couple of weeks, while confusion reigned unchanged, all meals were taken in a rather questionable diner in West Chelmsford, the nearest town, about two miles away.

That, of course, was only temporary. Soon a cook was engaged, and all meals were served at the main house.

It was really a sight to behold when the whole crowd assembled at one table. Such passing of things, and calling across the ways! And the singing was incessant. Some innocent soul would start to hum a tune

quite peacefully, when the whole crowd would pick it up, and ride it for a while until another tune caught the popular fancy. It was principally that spirit which kept the organization together during the more trying weeks. When they were hungry, they sang. When they were tired they sang. When they were annoyed or hurt, disappointed or even a little bit disillusioned, they worked it off in song.

One of the first problems was the old bugbear of a schedule to satisfy summer audiences. "Something light, please. We're on vacation, you know." Nothing but frivolous, giddy plays. It just isn't cricket to ask them to think between June and September. But on the whole, the schedule was most commendable.

The first production, under the aegis of the Lowell Chapter, was the ever-popular, if slightly worn "Holiday." The following week the permanent company swung into action with "Stage Door," played to receptive, though not too numerous audiences. "Night Must Fall" followed next, and then the mellow melodrama, "Pure as the Driven Snow," or "A Working Girl's Secret," which took audiences by violent storm wherever it was played. The tempo changed as popular comedy gave way to Andre Obey's fragile "Noah," tale of the Flood, simple and beautiful. It didn't quite penetrate the summer audiences, but then, of course, it really wasn't expected to.

"Eat Honey, My Son," a new social satire by Father Nagle, was the next offering, probably the best show of the season. "The Torchbearers," dependable, if not too subtle, comedy, rang down the curtain on what should be considered a satisfactory prelude to greater things to come.

At the start of the season, the playing nights were Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday at Nabnasset, and Saturday at the Catholic Summer School of America, Cliff Haven, N. Y. This was believed to be the greatest playing range of any company in New England. The troupe firmly contended that it was an all time high. It meant driving all day Saturday, from Nabnasset to Cliff Haven, arriving just in time to slap on some make-up, playing, catching a couple of hours' sleep, and mak-

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OF EQUAL DUST—A Play

By VINCENT A. CARLIN, Brooklyn, N. Y.

[In publishing Mr. Carlin's one-act play, "Of Equal Dust," we are continuing our policy of affording readers of Catholic Theatre an opportunity to examine new plays, which, in our humble opinion, are distinctive and replete with great promise. Our interest is to exploit, insofar as possible, works by Catholic authors that, in our judgment, are outstanding and deserve the attention of Catholic drama groups seeking new and meritorious Catholic scripts. This play cannot be produced except with the permission of the author. Requests for production privileges and for royalties may be made through the headquarters of the Catholic Theatre Conference.]

[It is late evening. There is discovered a room, circumspect and somber, and with an air of recent tragedy. Books and papers are scattered about, a chair is over-thrown. Deep center is a large crucifix on the wall, dominating the room. A door gapes open, upper right. Right center is a large window. Through the window, gradually, can be seen the reflection of a fitful light that increases and grows stronger throughout the play. For a moment there is silence. Outside, a noise, faint and far-away, grows nearer. There are a few far-echoing shots, then the noise of scuffling outside the door. A cautious, bedraggled figure steps through the door and enters, gun in hand. He looks swiftly around and going back to the door addresses someone a little down the hall.]

HENDREK (whispering). Gabriel, Gabriel, it is all right. There is no one here. Come along.

[Enter two other figures, one virtually carried by the other, both dirty, showing the effects of flight. The first one, Gabriel, lays the other, Michael, down on the floor upper left and sinks wearily into a chair. After a while he sees the crucifix, stares at it uneasily. Hendrek is anxiously peering out the window.]

GABRIEL. What do you see? Are the fires spreading?

HENDREK (slight foreign accent). It looks it. That block we came from just now seems to be on fire. Listen! Do you hear the shots? Our comrades must still be fighting.

GABRIEL. Aye. Oh, it will soon be over. But it may prove disastrous for our cause.

HENDREK. Nonsense. That is not so, you yourself have said it. This is only the beginning—the beginning. We can produce these skirmishes in many, dozens, of different places—until—boom, it is all one big skirmish—one big skirmish.

GABRIEL. If they catch us, perhaps we shall not be there to see the skirmish.

[Hendrek looks nervously out the window.]

HENDREK. Yes—yes.

GABRIEL. They were close tonight. An inch less of brick coping and the skirmish would have seen none of you.

HENDREK. Ah, yes, that is it. An inch less—(he looks nervously out for a moment again, then quickly back) and that other—the fire. Michael and I both owe our lives to you. You shall not find us lacking thanks. That is another score I owe you, comrade.

[There is a groan from Michael. Hendrek looks toward him.]

HENDREK. Is he burned badly?

GABRIEL. It seems so. He groaned fearfully for a time. And his leg—it—it looks useless. The Cause can bring great pain.

HENDREK. The fire seems to be growing. We are not yet out of the fire. (Pause.) How long do we stay here?

[Gabriel is lost in thought.]

HENDREK. Gabriel!

GABRIEL. Yes?

HENDREK. How long do we stay—here—?

GABRIEL. A while, till the rest come. The leader and the others.

[Hendrek resumes a restless position at the window.]

HENDREK. To me it is almost impossible that riot could have been started by such trivial methods.

GABRIEL. Wars have been started for less. Why should it be? What ghastly physic can be given for that unholy malady of man. It all seems to come to this—War and pain and death. Sometimes I wonder—

HENDREK (excited). Shh!

[He exits. Gabriel wanders slowly over to window and looks

somberly out. The red glare has increased, its fitfully lambent glow casting dark shadows over his face.]

[Reenter Hendrek.]

HENDREK. It's nothing. My imagination. I keep hearing noises everywhere. Lately it has been like that. A few hours of flight have made me into this. Hopelessly fearful. Or maybe it was the murders. Yes, maybe it was the murders. Funny thing. His eyes looked at me. His eyes looked at me as if—by God—as if I'd whipped him unjustly. Like a child he looked—unbelieving and hurt and all the while his lifeblood flooding over his sweater. It was a yellow sweater with a green band. And the blood ran some to one side of the band and some to the other. Still he looked at me. Just as if I'd whipped him. And all at once he was dead.

GABRIEL. Soft, Hendrek, soft. Blood and death are the guerdon. It must be so. Though sometimes, I am not sure. The blood today was shed in defense of the right of our black brothers here in Harlem to live. To live as human beings. We incited to riot, for the glory of equality—a shining white light of idealism to gild the blackness of those burned bodies out there. Maybe it was right. The black is the equal of the white. Death's huddled heap makes them equal. We saw that—but, the hate—the destruction—where will it lead? In this room—Death was here, I know that. (Looking at crucifix). Death and prayer—(Pointing to crucifix) like that.

HENDREK (pause). I think the fire comes nearer.

GABRIEL (in a low voice, strangely ethereal). "It was said to them of old—and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment." But I say to you that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the Council, and whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." (Pause.) "I will bless the Lord who hath given me understanding. I set God in my sight; for He is at my right hand that I be not moved."

HENDREK (pause). What words are those?

GABRIEL (reading on). "be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat and the body more than the raiment"—(pause). "Seek ye therefore, first, the kingdom of God and His justice and all these things shall be added unto you." (Looking up). I wonder, Hendrek, if that is not the answer. It is a question that cannot be answered by us.

HENDREK (bewildered). Eh—but whose are those words? Those are not ours. None of our leaders?

GABRIEL. No, God help us, they are not. Not one of our leaders would say those words, nor think them, nor think to think them. Those are words of eternal wisdom. Words I knew once, but not as I know them now. Yes, I used to kneel down before that (to the crucifix). I knew all the words. I thought they had died within me. I tried hard enough to slay them. Now they are beginning to glow, to live. They seem to be formed like men and walk alongside of me. They seem to seek me. "For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things." Our leaders would say—"take the meat and forget the life, forget the body"—that is what our leaders would say.

HENDREK. What did those words mean?

GABRIEL (arising). "Hate not thy brother." Well, we concreted that today. We practiced love today—by hatred. We preached against ownership—by reducing everything to ashes. (Pause.) Does the fire come nearer?

HENDREK (*gloomily*). Yes—nearer. I think we should go. Their rage will destroy most of this section.

GABRIEL (*passionately*). This is our work—that rage. We have built that. These flames, these dead—all ours. The Common Front has wrought well. Unveil the putrefaction—let the seared flesh trace its deathly theme. Or have we more to add? Our sculptured masterpiece is not finished—perhaps it is not finished until the sculptors be dead, caught in the same vise.

HENDREK (*looks at him, astonished*). You are not losing faith, Gabriel? You don't doubt our cause?

[*Gabriel does not answer, looking at the crucifix. Hendrek divides his watch between Gabriel and the fire, finally coming to Gabriel.*]

HENDREK. So often lately you have been bitter. You were once always a leader. You've changed—somehow.

GABRIEL. Tell me, Hendrek, do you believe that the Negro is the equal of the white man?

HENDREK. Would I have gone through today for them if I did not?

GABRIEL (*deadly serious*). You would perform any service for a Negro friend, as for a white friend?

HENDREK. Why, of course, if I could.

GABRIEL. In theory, it all sounds fine. He is my equal, the Negro. His soul, if he has one, is as white as mine. Are we not all born of women? "If you prick us, do we not bleed"? Do we not all descend finally into the void of fullness neighboring our fellow dust. What more could make us equal? Proud Death writes in golden letters "I call for all."

[*Hendrek through this musing is partly interested, partly distraught, dividing attention between the window and Gabriel.*]

HENDREK. I can't stand this much longer. When do we leave?

GABRIEL. It should not be long.

HENDREK. There's an evil about this place that sits on my spirit. I can't shake it off, no matter how I try. (*To crucifix*) It's that—that there. Let us go now, Gabriel, let us go.

GABRIEL. We must wait for the others. It is our duty to obey the commands.

HENDREK. But why—why—the riot, our masterpiece, is bungled. Death's hot breath is upon us. We die if we are caught. Our escape is being closed. You talk of commands, with death at our heels—

GABRIEL. Hendrek, Hendrek, my friend.

HENDREK. I won't stay here to die. I'm not a fool. I'm going.

GABRIEL (*at the door*). Hendrek, this is my brother, my comrade, fellow righter of wrongs, according to our vows. We have been friends many years before you joined the Cause. Pfah, we are not bougeois fools, fleeing at shadows, caught by our own temporizing regrets. We are vowed to the International—pledged to die for our fellow workers. We are the leaders. I am your leader. Out there—(*he points*) there is still need of us. My orders are to wait for the rest. Even if they never come, we must return and help our black brothers—rebuild what our riot has destroyed, curb these roaring flames and roaring men that beat the face of the city with hooves of hate. (*Suddenly breaking off.*) There should be no fear. This is an appointed place. They would not look for us here. See for yourself.

[*Looks up at the crucifix. His gaze is followed by Hendrek.*]

HENDREK. That has caused it all. No wonder I fear, with this baleful—I'll tear it down!

GABRIEL. No, comrade, let it remain! (*Quietly*) It has done no harm. It may do good if the pursuers come.

HENDREK (*slowly*). Yes. They would not think that symbol would still be intact, if we had been here. (*Laughs.*) How long must we wait?

GABRIEL (*evasively*). A while longer. (*Stretches in affected nonchalance.*) Better make yourself comfortable.

[*Hendrek is silent, restlessly pacing. Gabriel, seated, falls into a reverie, looking at the crucifix.*]

GABRIEL. Once I thought that symbol stood for peace, love, goodwill to men, all men—black, white. Beautiful thought—but just a thought. Nowhere did I find peace or love. Goodwill—a winged thing in the sky, out of reach. A different shaped nose, darker pigmentation of the skin, too much hair on the face, or too little—perhaps born on a hillside instead of a valley or nearer the North than the South—enough—pariah! Beautiful thought—Peace—Love. But only a thought.

HENDREK. There's little of peace or love here in this Party. But there is hate, it seems to me.

GABRIEL (*pause*). That's it. Hate. Hate is how we do it. We work toward Love through Hatred, or perhaps we work toward Pain and Death. I joined the Party because I hated society. That was the reason for my love for the Cause—my beloved. Through its eyes I saw reflected the soul of my Hatred. I worked for Hatred—calling it Love. Denied my denial of love. The riot today was hate. The murder—the fire—we protested today against the dispossessing of a Negro woman. We demanded her right to life. To get it—we killed her.

HENDREK. Not we.

GABRIEL. Oh, yes. Our hate killed her. She was slain by us. We have won her now a permanent dusty home. She now keeps nothing but a name and that—forgotten soon.

HENDREK. What is that to us?

GABRIEL. Our Cause can never win with hate. A phrase comes back to me, intense in its simplicity. Words I once knew. "Blessed"—blessed are the merciful—

HENDREK. Come, comrade, let us go.

GABRIEL (*is intent for a while then*). We must go back there! We must repair some of the ravages. (*Wildly.*) Show them—equality is what we practice. Our Cause is just—it must be just. HENDREK. Go back there? (*He points.*) Gabriel, come! It would be foolish to risk our lives in the impossible. It is the impossible.

GABRIEL. Our Cause has always demanded the impossible.

HENDREK. Not for aiding others. To further our Cause, yes.

GABRIEL (*stares*). That is it. Blind Hatred sealed my eyes and my heart. To think of it. Murder, rapine in the name of progress. Universal Hatred in the name of a coming Universal Love. (*Determined.*) We must go back. Our Cause suffers if we stay.

[*Hendrek is about to speak when Michael, whose groans have been becoming more frequent, stirs himself.*]

MICHAEL. Water—water—Hendrek—fire—water—water.

[*Gabriel goes to Michael.*]

GABRIEL. All right, Michael, all right, water it is.

MICHAEL (*as Gabriel fetches water*). Gabriel, Hendrek, I'm burning up. I can't stand it. I can't stand it.

GABRIEL. You will be cool in a while. Try to bear it.

MICHAEL. Try to bear it! I can't bear it—I can't. Oh, God! (*This last is a long shuddering sob. He relapses into a series of sobs. Gabriel walks over and sits gloomily in chair. Hendrek is still up by the window.*)

HENDREK. It's getting nearer, the fire.

MICHAEL. No, no! Help me get away—get me out of here, please, Hendrek, Gabriel. God, please, please!

HENDREK. Gabriel, I said it's getting nearer. It will be here soon. We cannot stay here. Gabriel?

MICHAEL. Let us go, Hendrek. Help me up.

GABRIEL. We must stay for a while. Then we go back—

MICHAEL. No—no—no.

GABRIEL. Back there. These people must be helped. They are our brothers—although they are black. We led them into an evil way. We must return and lead them back.

MICHAEL. You're crazy. It would mean our lives to go back there. It is impossible. We are murderers—rioters. Both sides hate us now. I cannot go. I am disabled. I can't walk. You two must help me.

HENDREK. It would be suicide to go back. And we cannot stay here. Even now the fire grows stronger. It comes nearer. Some small good we have done already for the Negro, our brother. It was not our fault the riot resulted, or the murders. It was self-preservation. Self-defense. Come—let us go. (*He starts toward the door. Gabriel is before him.*)

GABRIEL. No! I am your leader. I cannot order it. I must proceed as I think best. We can leave Michael here or near here. We must go back.

HENDREK. I can't understand. This is not our Cause. We are not bid to die for our fellow men. It is not for us to suffer pain or drop our blood in vain.

GABRIEL (*quietly*). It is through pain and blood we win. One of us must die that the other might live. He that lays down his life—(*automatically his head goes back toward the crucifix—almost whispering suddenly*). One must be crucified.

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DOGMA AND THE CATHOLIC PLAY

By WILLIAM K. TRIVETT, S.J., and WILLIAM F. LYNCH, S.J.

[Playwrights and critics alike confess that the relationship between thesis and theatre is a knotty problem that perhaps has never been solved to the complete satisfaction of the purist. The difficulties besetting the path of every playwright seeking to project a message through the medium of the stage are particularly harassing to the Catholic author, dedicated as he is to the vitalizing of Catholic philosophy by means of the drama. This is because the utterances of the pulpit must be presented on the stage without benefit of pulpit if the verities of theatre are to be maintained. Messrs. Trivett and Lynch, of the Drama Faculty at Fordham University, in the ensuing article have collaborated in a practical approach to the problem of theme and theatre, but it is an approach through the portals of metaphysics.]

THERE are two kinds of Catholic plays—plays by Catholics and plays about Catholics. As the term "Catholic Play" is used by most persons, it is much to be feared that they find it impossible to think of anything but the latter part of the label. This is more than a harmless, academic distinction. It is one of the major difficulties with many of the playwrights and litterateurs of the Church. Let us look into the matter.

Newman, in his "Grammar of Assent," has, in a classical way, made the distinction between the abstract idea and the real apprehension of, and assent to, that idea by the whole man. It is quite possible for a great truth, as enunciated by the individual on the surface of the mind and on the tip of the tongue, to be entirely anemic and ineffective. For truth, to have the quality of life, must rise out of personal experience, be an answer to it, and must be expressed in terms of it.

For example: we might ask ourselves under what circumstances we appreciate the full beauty of the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ. Certainly, among other things, in terms of the reality of human friendship or the human community. In a word, the necessities of our thinking and living are such that we cannot afford to make the abstract or the supernatural a vague addition to the natural world, almost a superfluity so far as it is concerned. The supernatural is not something apart from ourselves and other things. We and things are an intrinsic part of it. Finally, it is most important to grasp this: he who penetrates best into the depth and the true direction of the natural world that strikes his eyes and ears is advantageously disposed better to understand the supernatural. In very brief, theologians do not waste their time when they serve an apprenticeship in the sciences and the humanities.

What is the relation of all this to the drama? We are

likely to be very intent upon, and enthusiastic about, the staging of Catholic ideas and Catholic dogma, or a religious theory of life, without capably expressing them in terms of the realities with which we and our contemporaries have so much to do. It is a fault to be found in much Catholic poetry. The result is often a very facile type of writing that has no effect whatsoever because it has no sincerity. By sincerity we are not here concerned with the moral version of the virtue but with that literary quality which involves a real and profound possession and creation of characters and of things. Sincerity in this sense means that we must start from the ground up and not the reverse.

We will be altogether banal, for example, in our presentation of the supernatural until, by a long apprenticeship, we have become thoroughly intimate with the natural. We are too fond of the "thesis" play which, going no further than thesis, stops short of being real art.

Jacques Maritain has suggested to the Christian painter that he stop all work on the tabernacle lamp and concentrate for a long period on the creation of grapes and fish. The implication, of course, is that we be humble and devout and intelligent enough to bring to holy things and to the service of the Lord a skill and craft that will do justice to so severe a task as the art of dogma and the supernatural involves. For the drama is a craft, one of the most difficult, requiring the mastery of a hundred things: of words and their colorings; of rhythm in the single line; of rhythm in dialogue; of movement; structure and design in the whole; of character; of the ordinary and the more subtle movements of the heart; of that acting which involves years of training of the arms and legs and lips and even the arching of the eye-brow; of speech; of scenic design; and of how many other things.

The whole thing obviously demands humility and patience, as all art demands these virtues. We cannot approach Broadway with the conviction that the world has been waiting for us all these years and the new dawn is at last come for the drama. Although it goes without saying that we have the truth and a message, yet Broadway has for us a message of its own, and it is one of the craftsmanship of long years.

The danger with the ordinary student enthusiast who is told of the great need of a Catholic drama is obviously that he will rush immediately into the world of

explicit dogma without the humble preparation that has been suggested. How can such dogmatic violence be controlled?

The dramatic program of my own Fordham University for the current year may well serve as a fairly concrete and practical specimen of real workmanship prefacing the approach to the tabernacle. A first-hand knowledge of the history of the drama and its many phases is encouraged. One group is engaged in the study and production of the classical Greek plays. Streamlined adaptations of three masterpieces will be produced, two of them in the original Greek. One of them, *"The Clouds"* of Aristophanes, will be the first of a series of four short-version comedies in a language evening, the other three to be drawn from Plautus in Latin, Moliere in French, and Gilbert and Sullivan in the English. A "Communist" evening is planned Clifford Odet's, *"Waiting for Lefty"* will be presented in company with a Catholic play, *"Had Lefty Come,"* which is meant to be a model adapting of the primitive power of the Red theatre by a Catholic author with his own point to preach. Mr. Emmet Lavery is conducting a seminar for a group of the more promising students in the art of play construction. The fruit of this seminar, a group of plays drawn from any subject under

the sun, will be presented in a one-act-play contest. Finally—and the use of the word finally is deliberate—the university staged a Catholic drama based on the life of the martyr, Edmund Campion, *"Who Ride on White Horses"*. It was written by a student and thought excellent enough for production on Broadway.

This program of Fordham University is intended to point a generally healthy direction to any potential Catholic workshop or experimental theatre. At the same time its limitations are humbly acknowledged. It is felt, however, that all possible improvement should be in the direction already indicated, the institution of courses, departments, programs, all concerned with fundamental technique of speech, designing, construction, etc., in a word, the training of an artist.

But does all that has been said here both in and between the lines mean that there should be no such thing as a "thesis" play, *explicitly* teaching what the Catholic and Catholicism is? Perhaps, in the ideal order, there should not be. In a period of relaxation, that is, one in which the Church would not be forced forever to the construction or fortresses of defense, men could take their theology for granted, as something woven into their very veins, and could with *Saint Francis* sit

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TRUTH IN THE DRAMA

THE Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P., Editor of *The Catholic World*, has occasioned so many reflections in CATHOLIC THEATRE that we might well regard him as an associate editor. Equipped with a notable sense of the dramatic in his outlook upon life and history, Father Gillis again and again strikes from the brilliant anvil of his discourses, particularly those over the nationwide "Catholic Hour" broadcast, intellectual sparks that burst into flame in purlieus other than his own.

Again Father Gillis has furnished a motif for Catholic Theatre. Speaking over the radio in his last series on the "Catholic Hour," he asserted, among other things, that little is to be gained by writers and thinkers in glossing over uncomfortable truths which have an important bearing upon the course of history and closely touch fundamental principles. He pleaded for courage in facing truth when it is encountered, and he castigated those writers who, in meeting "an unedifying fact," seem to "shy away from it with the nervousness of a skittish horse." He added that the "four Evangelists are not

so timorous" and that "if the Gospel story had been committed to the pen of one of our modern hush-hush school of pietistic writers, I doubt if we would ever have heard of the story of Judas, apostate suicide apostle, and I am quite sure we would not have known that St. Peter in a miserable funk cursed and swore that he had never known Jesus Christ."

Here is a thought for the Catholic dramatist. Actually, Father Gillis was thinking specifically of the playwright, since his portrayal of ancient Biblical events in his radio series was formulated in the dramatic mode. After satisfying the demands of propriety, the playwright who draws his material from history, if he is to be sincere, honest and effective, should dare to hew close to fundamental facts. It is his right, of course, to project life on the stage as he sees it. His interpretation may prove distorted, but if his facts are faithfully set down, the quarrel with him will be intellectual and not moral. This question impinges on Catholic Theatre in that the Church's history, is replete with dramatic events which,

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PUPPETRY AND SPIRITUAL VALUES

By MARGARET I. MILLER

[Catholic Theatre encompasses all branches of the dramatic art. The Juvenile Theatre is an essential part of the integral picture, constituting as it does a training ground by which children can be prepared for later work in the College and Adult Theatre. The Puppet Theatre is rapidly becoming an invaluable section of the preparatory theatre and in this article Miss Miller stresses how puppetry can contribute to the spiritual as well as the dramatic development of young children.]

JANE is at the in-between age, the age that sits around dreaming of the styles and glamor of the newest Hollywood star. She is old enough to be disturbed by questions that life around her is forcing upon her, yet young enough to be satisfied by life's surface glitter. Such is a problem met by the mother of the pre-adolescent girl.

Jim is moon-struck. He does not get the punch out of the simple field games of the younger boys and does not quite fit into the sports of the older ones. He broods around the house over the glories of his latest football or baseball hero. The modern father of this modern boy would not be so perturbed over the problem if his son restricted his worship to his athletic heroes, but when it includes the stars of gangster escapades in motion pictures the father sees possible danger ahead for his son's mental health.

To Catholic parents, these problems threaten for their children greater evils than mere abnormal forms of day-dreaming. They see on the road ahead moral and spiritual wreckage resulting from too much personality inversion.

The solution for all parents, from a natural and supernatural standpoint, lies in interesting their offspring in creative work, both of the mind and the hands.

The parents of some eighth graders I know found the answer to the problem in the field of puppetry. It was Christmas time when Anne scornfully tilted up her nose at a book she had received on "Children's Christmas in Many Lands."

"Why not dramatize the story and make your own marionettes?" her mother suggested.

"But we don't know how to write plays, and we don't know anything about art, so how could we make a puppet play?" the girl came back.

But Anne lay awake that night thinking about the suggestion and next day told her companions of the idea. True, both from the standpoint of dramatic and puppet technique, the play they created was crude, but it had been engaging enough for them to work through to a glorious finish. From Christmas to Easter they modelled clay, smeared themselves in plaster-paris,

gummed their fingers with plastic wood, stained their hands with oil and poster paints, and even tore a few finger nails with pliers. But they all sensed an exultant thrill of accomplishment. They found less and less time for the Friday night picture shows and, therefore, were able to put odd nickels, dimes, and quarters into the puppetry fund. The Christmas play was a bit out of season at Eastertide, but nobody cared.

Even fairy tales took on a new lustre as the group ventured into its second production and attempted an elaborate stage-setting for Cinderella's ball, although the elaboration consisted of a few sheets of dime-store cellophane, a few Christmas bulbs resurrected from the family store-room, to supply the lighting, and gowns that grew out of odds and ends of silks, satins, and velvets from attic trunks.

Over and above the fairy tales, for the Catholic child there stand library shelves of lives of the saints ready to be dramatized. In fact, Henri Gheon has done two religious plays for children, "The Journey of the Three Kings" and "St. Nicholas." If these seem too infantile for the sophisticate of the early teens there is one saint on whom a wealth of material has been done and is ageless in his appeal to every age. He is the little poor man, Francis of Assisi. May Byron has written a brief and simple biography of Francis that easily could be carried into drama. Too, there are Joan Windam's "Six O'Clock Saints," "More Saints for Six O'Clock," and "The King's Christmas Present" that would lend themselves beautifully to puppet plays.

Parents might ask the question, "What, specifically, is there in it for our children, other than a substitute for their day-dreams and reveries? Specifically, how does puppetry engage all the powers of our children?"

Puppetry not only engages and develops all the natural faculties of children, but, if properly directed, may develop their supernatural powers. Four natural faculties, the senses, imagination, emotions, and intellect work together in planning a play, not only in terms of dramatic technique, but in the visualizing and designing of the settings, the costumes, and the expression of the puppets themselves. Learning the lines of the play

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UNDER THE MARQUEE

This column of news, notes and comments is for the information of our members and the other readers of this magazine. To facilitate the handling of such material we request that groups or individuals desiring to forward data for use in *Under the Marquee* send same to the CATHOLIC THEATRE CONFERENCE, Office of the Secretary, the Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C., labelled "Marquee." We are interested in the activities of all our members and prospective members and we will use, in so far as possible, all material relating to such activities if such is provided us.

If there is any doubt as to the pace of the 1939-40 season of Catholic Theatre a very rapid glance at the Marquis' desk will dispel it presto . . . The stacked reports have trickled in from as far as New Zealand and as near as Washington . . . So, First Nighters, better take a nice comfortable easy chair there in the lobby and hope for a long intermission . . . because the *entre acte* chatter has much to cover. . . If first things don't come first, be patient and forbearing, because lobby small talk is desultory at best . . . Already we hear someone over there mentioning the Catholic Theatre Guild's production of "Shadow and Substance" in Los Angeles on February 3 . . . We'll hear more about that group if we stay out here in the lobby long enough . . . There's a whisper about the "Murder in the Cathedral" production just off the chest . . . or chests . . . of the Twin College Players in Atchison, Kans. . . St. Scholastica and St. Benedict's Colleges to be specific . . . Given first at the former college, it was taken to Municipal Auditorium in Kansas City at the invitation of the Holy Name Society of Kansas City . . . Which reminds that Robert Speaight, the English actor, whose generosity the past couple of years has led him into American Catholic Theatre as the Guest Leading Man par excellence, will appear at the Catholic University of America again, come March 24, 25, and 26. He will take up the roll he created for the London production of "Eliot's Great Vehicle," which ran three years. . . And while we're on the subject of the Drama School at Catholic U. . . about which there are some pictures and words to match elsewhere in this issue . . . we can't forget to applaud again the ambitious and panoramic "Yankee Doodle Boy," the 24-scene musical based on the life of George M. Cohan, which the C. U. Drama School unfolded before a wide public shortly before the holidays . . . And the students did it all themselves, except that Mr. Cohan, who is somewhat familiar to theatre folk, by spending a lifetime on the stage, yielded the material . . . song and story . . . for the opus . . . An attempt to encompass Mr. Cohan's days in the theatre is a challenge to the genius and capacities of any dramatist or dramatic organization . . . C. U. met the challenge successfully . . . Walter Kerr a faculty member, and Leo Brady (Brother Orchid) slaved collaboratively in producing the script . . . Mr. Cohan assisted with his kindness, moral support, permission to render his better known song hits, and with his compelling personality which was witnessed by a distinguished audience at the third performance when "Yankle Doodle Boy" himself flew from New York to the Capital to see the show . . . We could go on and on, but you will have to wait for that ten-volume history of Catholic Theatre, to get all the glamorous details . . . "Brother Orchid," Leo Brady's peregrinating play, premiered by Catholic U. last year, landed in Pittsburgh in January, and some thirty seven other places . . . our adding machine hasn't caught up yet . . . and reports indicate great interest there in the Catholic Theatre Guild's presentation of the comedy . . . One performance benefitted the fighting Finns, and from what we hear the Catholic Theatre Guild's production of the play also was of benefit to that fine group's prestige . . . It might be said, the Guilders in Pittsburgh are preoccupied with the menace of totalitarianism . . . They opened their season with Norman Mac-owan's "Glorious Morning," a beautifully written play set in an imaginary totalitarian State of the communal garden variety and describing the idyllic (?) life therein . . . "Glorious Morning" was first seen in London, in 1938, and is being looked at by other Catholic groups here . . . We said something about New Zealand early in this session . . . we weren't exaggerating. There is a report here about a production of Martinez Sierra's "Kingdom of God," in Wellington this month . . . It is to be given by the New Zealand Catholic Players in connection with the National Eucharistic Congress "down under". . . The Foreign De-

partment further contributes the note that a gallant troupe of Chinese actors entertained the people of . . . of . . . just a moment, we'll get it straight . . . Ningyuanfu, Sze, China . . . to raise funds for public welfare . . . some of the money was turned over by the players to the Vicar Apostolic for the Mission Home in . . . well, that place . . . and . . . whoops, a western wind has blown the chatter back to the U. S. A. and we hear now that Fordham University has been riding on white horses or something . . . wait, reception is very bad . . . Oh, yes . . . It develops that the students at New York's great Jesuit University also have done some writing of a high order and have come up with a stream-lined version of the life of Blessed Edmund Campion, which is a sort of theatrical observance of the Jesuits' fourth centenary . . . The title? "Who Ride on White Horses." . . . Co-authored by Richard Breen and Harry Schnibbe, the Campion play, given in the Heckscher Theatre in downtown New York, was one of the productions which merited the praise of Mrs. Hallie Flanagan for its use of the Living Newspaper technique . . . Young Mr. Breen, it must be remembered, is the author of "The Dream-slayers," that striking little one-acter on Communism which Fordham University Press now publishes . . . Both he and Mr. Schnibbe turned out the Campion vehicle under the direction of Emmet Lavery . . . and to distinguish it further, Mr. Speaight took the leading role . . . and did it, according to our representative at the production, with his usual virtuosity and polish. . . See aforementioned ten-volume history of Catholic Theatre for further details also . . . Way down South in New Orleans a jubilarian dramatic director is to be honored . . . He is Dr. Alfred J. Bonomo, who steers affairs dramatic at Loyola University of the South and has done so for the past quarter of a century . . . In his honor, a gold medal will be awarded annually for the best individual dramatic performance of the year at the university . . . Dr. Bonomo at one time had under his direction the Very Rev. Thomas Shields, S. J., present Provincial of the Southern Province of the Society of Jesus, the Rev. Harold A. Gaudin, S. J., a former President of Loyola, and the Rev. Warren J. Barker, S. J., now Loyola's Dean . . . All three held spears in a play called "The Wheels of Justice," directed by Dr. Bonomo . . . The jubilarian is a graduate of Georgetown U. . . And Prince Gallitizin positively will be the subject of a dramatic pageant . . . A priest—the Rev. Albert A. Gartland, Assistant Pastor of St. John Gualbert's Church, Johnstown, Pa., and Associate Editor of the Altoona Edition of *The Register*, has finished a script on the famed Prince-Missionary which won him the contest the Altoona Diocese conducted to get a suitable manuscript for a pageant planned in May to commemorate the centenary of the death of Prince Demetrius Augustine Gallitizin, pioneer missionary of the Alleghanies. . . There's been drama in them thar Alleghanies because of Father Gallitizin, and Father Gartland is to be congratulated for making the most of it. . . Best of luck to the Altoona Diocese in its pageant project . . .

Since this is a circuitous column, it might not now be amiss to mention something of the Conference's Play Cycle plans for this year. . . The New York and Chicago areas are busily at work preparing for their second annual Cycles . . . and close upon their heels are the steadily developing plans for the first Cycle in the Washington district. . . Details are rather patchy at present, although we do happen to know that eight groups are engineering the Cycle in the Capital . . . We expect momentous things from the Cycle Committees in N. Y. and Chi., this year . . . More about those and them in next issue . . . Did you hear . . . and probably you did . . . that the venturesome Mr. Maurice Evans is about to pluck from under our noses something of our very own . . . but since we Catholics in the theatre seem to have been somewhat remiss, or cold, in the matter of exploiting

Housman's "Little Plays of St. Francis," we can have no legitimate protest if Mr. Evans seizes upon them as further fields for his conquering genius . . . As a matter of fact, we wish Mr. Evans good luck . . . and offer him our thanks for spying the gold that glistens in the "Little Plays." . . . Catholic Theatre, in some respects, still tags along behind until our brethren in the theatre and outside the fold demonstrate for us what fine plays we have, Grandma . . . Martin B. Fallon, Acting Dean of Drama at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, has been named Director of "Veronica's Veil," the well-known Passion Play of the Passionist Fathers in Union City, N. J. . . . And on the subject of appointments, the Rev. Henry J. Lenahan, of the Cathedral College faculty in New York, has been named by Archbishop Spellman, Director of the Catholic Theatre movement in that city. . . . That's the "White List's" parent, you know, and under Father Lenahan's direction we are sure it will continue its valuable work. . . .

Thanks are due Courtenay Savage, author, playwright and radio scenarist of Chicago . . . A recent number of *Columbia*, the K. of C. mouthpiece, carried a plea by Mr. Savage for Catholic writers to use their heritage in the weaving of plays . . . He cited that heritage, in part, and offered it as a counteracting influence for the poisonous stuff sprayed about by subversive groups . . . Mr. Savage is a member, and a good friend, of the Catholic Theatre Conference. . . . We need more of your writing, Mr. Savage . . .

Mrs. Flanagan was right . . . Holy Cross College, in Worcester, Mass., is employing the Living Newspaper device to dramatize the Papal Encyclicals . . . That is Catholic Theatre with capital letters . . . when your plays are not only inspired by the voice of the Vicar of Christ, but in fact, bring to life on the stage the utterance in papal documents in . . . No, my dear sirs, Mr. Lavery has not holed up to write another play . . . He is very much in the trenches . . . and, we suspect, is writing plays, too . . . For one thing, he is Assistant, directing Mrs. Flanagan at Vassar in theatre research based on the records of Federal Theatre . . . for another, as we have hinted, he is a conspicuous figure at Fordham conducting playwrighting seminars, directing, being as always very much of a dynamic force in the advancement of vital theatre. . . . Anent the Lavery brain child, "The First Legion," reports from Buenos Aires indicate that offspring has wandered away from its kith and kin down to Argentina, where it is doing very well, thank you . . . and is undergoing translation . . . painlessly, we are told . . . into Portuguese, which foreshadows a trip to Brazil . . . And a phone call has just let us in on the knowledge that the ubiquitous Mr. Lavery is to direct his drama on Father Damian . . . "Kamiano" . . . to be rendered by Georgetown University's Mask and Bauble Club in February . . . Pittsburgh's Catholic Theatre Guild unveiled "Kamiano" last year . . . And so the list of panoramic-historic Catholic plays grows . . . Catholic colleges do march in this Catholic Theatre procession . . . God bless 'em. . . .

Our short-wave set is in operation again with a news note from Erin . . . One of the results of the desire to encourage the growth of native theatrical art there is the establishment of local theatres in different areas of Ireland . . . Foremost is the Birr Little Theatre . . . And, whoa . . . more, as the newspaper reporters say . . . Carroll's "Shadow and Substance" was scheduled by that group, but lo, . . . it never happened, although everything was set for the first night. . . . Local objection to the play's theme caused producers to withdraw the production at the last moment . . . The Abbey did it first in Dublin, as we all know. . . . If we're not too flip, maybe the play's substance became a shadow at production time.

We recommend a full reading of Father Gillis' last series of discourses over the "Catholic Hour" . . . Theatre folk will find the sermons right down their blocks . . . The National Council of Catholic Men in Washington will be glad to send copies, we're sure . . . Stage door entrances in Chicago are getting something new in the way of bulletin boards. Through the efforts of the Catholic Actors Guild a framed directory of the hours of Sunday Masses and special services at the Cathedral of the Holy Name, the "Actors Church," has been placed at the stage entrances of all legitimate theatres. . . . Now here we are . . . The Catholic Theatre Guild in Los Angeles counts some 900 members . . . and in the course of the season is offer-

ing its patrons 10 major events . . . These features include lectures . . . Bishop Kelley, of Oklahoma City and Tulsa, Dr. Paul Furley, Catholic U. sociologist, Maisie Ward, of Sheed and Ward . . . the Glacier Priest, Father Bernard R. Hubbard, S.J. . . . and plays like "Shadow and Substance," as was mentioned, "My Heart's in the Highlands," by William Saroyan, young San Jose playwright, who has another hit currently on Broadway, . . . and "Cradle Song" by Sierra. . . . Nice words come from J. A. McLaughlin, President of the Theatre Art Guild of Ottawa. . . . "You are to be complimented on the interesting and instructive issue of CATHOLIC THEATRE," says he. "Among others, 'Under the Marquee' contains a good deal of encouragement for struggling groups—struggling as much to crystallize their ideals as to get established financially". . . . Miss Clancy's article, "Give 'Em Blue Sky" in last issue, Mr. McLaughlin says, stimulated interest in publicity in his Guild . . . He adds the Guild has a laboratory class on acting technique, an active committee on stage work . . . as well as study circles on playwrighting . . . and publicity . . . and experimental make-up . . . Father Owen Dudley's "Masterful Monk" and "The Late Christopher Bean" are some of the matters attended to competently by this promising group in recent months. . . . A full-length play and three nights of one-act plays are on the agenda for the coming weeks. . . . The Guild is also doing short plays for soldiers . . . so the war, which has touched Canada, is rendered less miserable because of this generous group's efforts . . .

We find the Tracomian Players in Cleveland busy as usual. . . . "Far Off Hills" is already part of their season's history as will be Barry's "Joyous Season" come press time. . . .

And so arrives the winter of our discontent . . . because the lights have dipped and the curtain is ready to rise on the next quarter of our Catholic Theatre season . . . We mustn't miss it, because the Marquis likes to gossip with you between acts . . . Our suggestion for the quarter: try to plan your program of major productions next season in such a way as to include a spot for at least one of the successful new plays premiered by such groups as the players at Fordham, Catholic University, and Holy Cross . . . They have pioneered with these vehicles and you may profit much from their experience and experiences in the precarious work of initiating new Catholic scripts. They have reduced considerably the necessity of gambling with untried plays and can serve as your proving ground . . . Isn't it a nice sort of reciprocity and a real cooperative move in the cause of Catholic Theatre to exploit the new dramas these groups have had the resourcefulness, energy and courage to introduce "cold" to a critical public? . . . Until the Spring then . . .

THE MARQUIS.



Cycles

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The lack of original Catholic plays was stressed. Fordham's one-act was the only original contribution. It was emphasized, however, that by supplying Catholic playwrights with an opportunity to present new plays, the stimulus was given for creative work.

It was agreed at the outset that the colleges individually would be responsible for their performances—cost of theatre, royalty, transportation of scenery, stagehands, and sale of tickets.

The Barbizon-Plaza Theatre was selected because of its audience-appeal—its central location, size and comfort of auditorium, and professional atmosphere. The manager of the theatre was most cooperative, and at the conclusion of the cycle it was generally agreed that this choice was a wise one in spite of the expense involved. Tickets for the majority of orchestra seats were sold at \$1, for rear of orchestra; and balcony, 50 cents.

The chief difficulty presented by use of the Barbizon was the need of telescoping performances. Rehearsal time, while available to some extent, was valuable, and the rapid succession of plays could not have been managed without the kindly cooperation of all the colleges. The souvenir program for the cycle was managed by Mrs. Wyatt, who secured the services of a paid advertising solicitor. The funds received by the Central Committee for advertisements in the joint program and sponsor-series and individual performance tickets were used to defray the expense of the program, publicity, and theatre gratuities. A small surplus on hand in June the colleges decided to leave with the treasurer for a 1940 fund.

St. Elizabeth's College, of Convent, N. J., was the only participant that printed its own program, and because of its location it was able to secure many advertisements which could not have been solicited by the New York program.

Excellent publicity was secured in *The Catholic World* by Mrs. Wyatt; considerable space was also given to the program by *The Catholic News*, *The Brooklyn Tablet*, and New York daily and Sunday papers. This latter publicity was submitted by individual colleges in addition to that sent out by the secretary. Two paid advertisements were inserted.

Because the individual colleges assumed entire financial responsibility for their performances, it is not possible to tell accurately just what the cycle cost. The theatre

charge, \$500, was divided four times, and on the evening of May 8, for the one-act plays, three times again. The College of St. Elizabeth, which had the largest audience, cannot give an exact idea of this project because two other performances of the play were given at the college and a sum total of all expenses, including the director, was taken. Their total income represented approximately \$875, and total expenses \$800.

Fordham University—which had the least in outlay, because it had no expense for royalty, costumes, scenery, or coach—lost \$7 on their venture.

The College of New Rochelle stood a comparatively heavy loss on its production, but it explains that this was due to the repetition of a play given three times before, and to restrictions regarding the late return to college of resident students—errors they hope to overcome in another attempt.

It was evident the financial success of the productions depended upon individual college support. The general

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Enter Director

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set, or by having his characters bless themselves before sitting down to table—but against a background, abstract, symbolic, or suggestive, as you will, which will complement the essential meaning of a Catholic playwright's *thought*.

Lacking Catholic plays in such a form (although there are always the tentative gropings of Eliot and Sayers,) what is the director to practice on? Let him try Shakespeare and the Greeks, in whose plays the moral nature of man is emphatic, until he shall find a method of projecting that nature theatrically which will become available to the playwright. It always has seemed to me to be a distortion of Shakespeare to present him realistically. It is obvious from *The Family Reunion* that T. S. Eliot is begging for a director who will teach him how to say, in terms that will be effective for an audience, what he so courageously insists upon saying.

And when the director has taken the playwright's hand and led him into the promised land, it will be the latter's job to work at the soil toward harvest.

Only one word of caution: directors who dare experimentation in the face of a current philosophy always wind up in concentration camps.

Look at Meierhold. I am making my reservation now.

OF EQUAL DUST—A Play

By VINCENT A. CARLIN, Brooklyn, N. Y.

[In publishing Mr. Carlin's one-act play, "Of Equal Dust," we are continuing our policy of affording readers of Catholic Theatre an opportunity to examine new plays, which, in our humble opinion, are distinctive and replete with great promise. Our interest is to exploit, insofar as possible, works by Catholic authors that, in our judgment, are outstanding and deserve the attention of Catholic drama groups seeking new and meritorious Catholic scripts. This play cannot be produced except with the permission of the author. Requests for production privileges and for royalties may be made through the headquarters of the Catholic Theatre Conference.]

[It is late evening. There is discovered a room, circumspect and somber, and with an air of recent tragedy. Books and papers are scattered about, a chair is over-thrown. Deep center is a large crucifix on the wall, dominating the room. A door gapes open, upper right. Right center is a large window. Through the window, gradually, can be seen the reflection of a fitful light that increases and grows stronger throughout the play. For a moment there is silence. Outside, a noise, faint and far-away, grows nearer. There are a few far-echoing shots, then the noise of scuffling outside the door. A cautious, bedraggled figure steps through the door and enters, gun in hand. He looks swiftly around and going back to the door addresses someone a little down the hall.]

HENDREK (whispering). Gabriel, Gabriel, it is all right. There is no one here. Come along.

[Enter two other figures, one virtually carried by the other, both dirty, showing the effects of flight. The first one, Gabriel, lays the other, Michael, down on the floor upper left and sinks wearily into a chair. After a while he sees the crucifix, stares at it uneasily. Hendrek is anxiously peering out the window.]

GABRIEL. What do you see? Are the fires spreading?

HENDREK (slight foreign accent). It looks it. That block we came from just now seems to be on fire. Listen! Do you hear the shots? Our comrades must still be fighting.

GABRIEL. Aye. Oh, it will soon be over. But it may prove disastrous for our cause.

HENDREK. Nonsense. That is not so, you yourself have said it. This is only the beginning—the beginning. We can produce these skirmishes in many, dozens, of different places—until—boom, it is all one big skirmish—one big skirmish.

GABRIEL. If they catch us, perhaps we shall not be there to see the skirmish.

[Hendrek looks nervously out the window.]

HENDREK. Yes—yes.

GABRIEL. They were close tonight. An inch less of brick coping and the skirmish would have seen none of you.

HENDREK. Ah, yes, that is it. An inch less—(he looks nervously out for a moment again, then quickly back) and that other—the fire. Michael and I both owe our lives to you. You shall not find us lacking thanks. That is another score I owe you, comrade.

[There is a groan from Michael. Hendrek looks toward him.]

HENDREK. Is he burned badly?

GABRIEL. It seems so. He groaned fearfully for a time. And his leg—it—it looks useless. The Cause can bring great pain.

HENDREK. The fire seems to be growing. We are not yet out of the fire. (Pause.) How long do we stay here?

[Gabriel is lost in thought.]

HENDREK. Gabriel!

GABRIEL. Yes?

HENDREK. How long do we stay—here—?

GABRIEL. A while, till the rest come. The leader and the others.

[Hendrek resumes a restless position at the window.]

HENDREK. To me it is almost impossible that riot could have been started by such trivial methods.

GABRIEL. Wars have been started for less. Why should it be? What ghastly physic can be given for that unholy malady of man. It all seems to come to this—War and pain and death. Sometimes I wonder—

HENDREK (excited). Shh!

[He exits. Gabriel wanders slowly over to window and looks

somberly out. The red glare has increased, its fitfully lambent glow casting dark shadows over his face.]

[Reenter Hendrek.]

HENDREK. It's nothing. My imagination. I keep hearing noises everywhere. Lately it has been like that. A few hours of flight have made me into this. Hopelessly fearful. Or maybe it was the murders. Yes, maybe it was the murders. Funny thing. His eyes looked at me. His eyes looked at me as if—by God—as if I'd whipped him unjustly. Like a child he looked—unbelieving and hurt and all the while his lifeblood flooding over his sweater. It was a yellow sweater with a green band. And the blood ran some to one side of the band and some to the other. Still he looked at me. Just as if I'd whipped him. And all at once he was dead.

GABRIEL. Soft, Hendrek, soft. Blood and death are the guerdon. It must be so. Though sometimes, I am not sure. The blood today was shed in defense of the right of our black brothers here in Harlem to live. To live as human beings. We incited to riot, for the glory of equality—a shining white light of idealism to gild the blackness of those burned bodies out there. Maybe it was right. The black is the equal of the white. Death's huddled heap makes them equal. We saw that—but, the hate—the destruction—where will it lead? In this room—Death was here, I know that. (Looking at crucifix). Death and prayer—(Pointing to crucifix) like that.

HENDREK (pause). I think the fire comes nearer.

GABRIEL (in a low voice, strangely ethereal). "It was said to them of old—and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment." But I say to you that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the Council, and whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." (Pause.) "I will bless the Lord who hath given me understanding. I set God in my sight; for He is at my right hand that I be not moved."

HENDREK (pause). What words are those?

GABRIEL (reading on). "be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat and the body more than the raiment"—(pause). "Seek ye therefore, first, the kingdom of God and His justice and all these things shall be added unto you." (Looking up). I wonder, Hendrek, if that is not the answer. It is a question that cannot be answered by us.

HENDREK (bewildered). Eh—but whose are those words? Those are not ours. None of our leaders?

GABRIEL. No, God help us, they are not. Not one of our leaders would say those words, nor think them, nor think to think them. Those are words of eternal wisdom. Words I knew once, but not as I know them now. Yes, I used to kneel down before that (to the crucifix). I knew all the words. I thought they had died within me. I tried hard enough to slay them. Now they are beginning to glow, to live. They seem to be formed like men and walk alongside of me. They seem to seek me. "For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things." Our leaders would say—"take the meat and forget the life, forget the body"—that is what our leaders would say.

HENDREK. What did those words mean?

GABRIEL (arising). "Hate not thy brother." Well, we concurred that today. We practiced love today—by hatred. We preached against ownership—by reducing everything to ashes. (Pause.) Does the fire come nearer?

HENDREK (*gloomily*). Yes—nearer. I think we should go. Their rage will destroy most of this section.

GABRIEL (*passionately*). This is our work—that rage. We have built that. These flames, these dead—all ours. The Common Front has wrought well. Unveil the putrefaction—let the seared flesh trace its deathly theme. Or have we more to add? Our sculptured masterpiece is not finished—perhaps it is not finished until the sculptors be dead, caught in the same vise.

HENDREK (*looks at him, astonished*). You are not losing faith, Gabriel? You don't doubt our cause?

[*Gabriel does not answer, looking at the crucifix. Hendrek divides his watch between Gabriel and the fire, finally coming to Gabriel.*]

HENDREK. So often lately you have been bitter. You were once always a leader. You've changed—somehow.

GABRIEL. Tell me, Hendrek, do you believe that the Negro is the equal of the white man?

HENDREK. Would I have gone through today for them if I did not?

GABRIEL (*deadly serious*). You would perform any service for a Negro friend, as for a white friend?

HENDREK. Why, of course, if I could.

GABRIEL. In theory, it all sounds fine. He is my equal, the Negro. His soul, if he has one, is as white as mine. Are we not all born of women? "If you prick us, do we not bleed"? Do we not all descend finally into the void of fullness neighboring our fellow dust. What more could make us equal? Proud Death writes in golden letters "I call for all."

[*Hendrek through this musing is partly interested, partly distraught, dividing attention between the window and Gabriel.*]

HENDREK. I can't stand this much longer. When do we leave?

GABRIEL. It should not be long.

HENDREK. There's an evil about this place that sits on my spirit. I can't shake it off, no matter how I try. (*To crucifix*) It's that—that there. Let us go now, Gabriel, let us go.

GABRIEL. We must wait for the others. It is our duty to obey the commands.

HENDREK. But why—why—the riot, our masterpiece, is bungled. Death's hot breath is upon us. We die if we are caught. Our escape is being closed. You talk of commands, with death at our heels—

GABRIEL. Hendrek, Hendrek, my friend.

HENDREK. I won't stay here to die. I'm not a fool. I'm going. GABRIEL (*at the door*). Hendrek, this is my brother, my comrade, fellow righter of wrongs, according to our vows. We have been friends many years before you joined the Cause. Pfah, we are not bourgeois fools, fleeing at shadows, caught by our own temporizing regrets. We are vowed to the International—pledged to die for our fellow workers. We are the leaders. I am your leader. Out there—(*he points*) there is still need of us. My orders are to wait for the rest. Even if they never come, we must return and help our black brothers—rebuild what our riot has destroyed, curb these roaring flames and roaring men that beat the face of the city with hooves of hate. (*Suddenly breaking off.*) There should be no fear. This is an appointed place. They would not look for us here. See for yourself.

[*Looks up at the crucifix. His gaze is followed by Hendrek.*]

HENDREK. That has caused it all. No wonder I fear, with this baleful—I'll tear it down!

GABRIEL. No, comrade, let it remain! (*Quietly*) It has done no harm. It may do good if the pursuers come.

HENDREK (*slowly*). Yes. They would not think that symbol would still be intact, if we had been here. (*Laughs.*) How long must we wait?

GABRIEL (*evasively*). A while longer. (*Stretches in affected nonchalance.*) Better make yourself comfortable.

[*Hendrek is silent, restlessly pacing. Gabriel, seated, falls into a reverie, looking at the crucifix.*]

GABRIEL. Once I thought that symbol stood for peace, love, goodwill to men, all men—black, white. Beautiful thought—but just a thought. Nowhere did I find peace or love. Goodwill—a winged thing in the sky, out of reach. A different shaped nose, darker pigmentation of the skin, too much hair on the face, or too little—perhaps born on a hillside instead of a valley or nearer the North than the South—enough—pariah! Beautiful thought—Peace—Love. But only a thought.

HENDREK. There's little of peace or love here in this Party. But there is hate, it seems to me.

GABRIEL (*pause*). That's it. Hate. Hate is how we do it. We work toward Love through Hatred, or perhaps we work toward Pain and Death. I joined the Party because I hated society. That was the reason for my love for the Cause—my beloved. Through its eyes I saw reflected the soul of my Hatred. I worked for Hatred—calling it Love. Denied my denial of love. The riot today was hate. The murder—the fire—we protested today against the dispossessing of a Negro woman. We demanded her right to life. To get it—we killed her.

HENDREK. Not we.

GABRIEL. Oh, yes. Our hate killed her. She was slain by us. We have won her now a permanent dusty home. She now keeps nothing but a name and that—forgotten soon.

HENDREK. What is that to us?

GABRIEL. Our Cause can never win with hate. A phrase comes back to me, intense in its simplicity. Words I once knew. "Blessed"—blessed are the merciful—

HENDREK. Come, comrade, let us go.

GABRIEL (*is intent for a while then*). We must go back there! We must repair some of the ravages. (*Wildly.*) Show them—equality is what we practice. Our Cause is just—it must be just. HENDREK. Go back there? (*He points.*) Gabriel, come! It would be foolish to risk our lives in the impossible. It is the impossible.

GABRIEL. Our Cause has always demanded the impossible.

HENDREK. Not for aiding others. To further our Cause, yes. GABRIEL (*stares*). That is it. Blind Hatred sealed my eyes and my heart. To think of it. Murder, rapine in the name of progress. Universal Hatred in the name of a coming Universal Love. (*Determined.*) We must go back. Our Cause suffers if we stay.

[*Hendrek is about to speak when Michael, whose groans have been becoming more frequent, stirs himself.*]

MICHAEL. Water—water—Hendrek—fire—water—water.

[*Gabriel goes to Michael.*]

GABRIEL. All right, Michael, all right, water it is.

MICHAEL (*as Gabriel fetches water*). Gabriel, Hendrek, I'm burning up. I can't stand it. I can't stand it.

GABRIEL. You will be cool in a while. Try to bear it.

MICHAEL. Try to bear it! I can't bear it—I can't. Oh, God! (*This last is a long shuddering sob. He relapses into a series of sobs. Gabriel walks over and sits gloomily in chair. Hendrek is still up by the window.*)

HENDREK. It's getting nearer, the fire.

MICHAEL. No, no! Help me get away—get me out of here, please, Hendrek, Gabriel. God, please, please!

HENDREK. Gabriel, I said it's getting nearer. It will be here soon. We cannot stay here. Gabriel?

MICHAEL. Let us go, Hendrek. Help me up.

GABRIEL. We must stay for a while. Then we go back—

MICHAEL. No—no—no.

GABRIEL. Back there. These people must be helped. They are our brothers—although they are black. We led them into an evil way. We must return and lead them back.

MICHAEL. You're crazy. It would mean our lives to go back there. It is impossible. We are murderers—rioters. Both sides hate us now. I cannot go. I am disabled. I can't walk. You two must help me.

HENDREK. It would be suicide to go back. And we cannot stay here. Even now the fire grows stronger. It comes nearer. Some small good we have done already for the Negro, our brother. It was not our fault the riot resulted, or the murders. It was self-preservation. Self-defense. Come—let us go. (*He starts toward the door. Gabriel is before him.*)

GABRIEL. No! I am your leader. I cannot order it. I must proceed as I think best. We can leave Michael here or near here. We must go back.

HENDREK. I can't understand. This is not our Cause. We are not bid to die for our fellow men. It is not for us to suffer pain or drop our blood in vain.

GABRIEL (*quietly*). It is through pain and blood we win. One of us must die that the other might live. He that lays down his life—(*automatically his head goes back toward the crucifix—almost whispering suddenly*). One must be crucified.

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DOGMA AND THE CATHOLIC PLAY

By WILLIAM K. TRIVETT, S.J., and WILLIAM F. LYNCH, S.J.

[Playwrights and critics alike confess that the relationship between thesis and theatre is a knotty problem that perhaps has never been solved to the complete satisfaction of the purist. The difficulties besetting the path of every playwright seeking to project a message through the medium of the stage are particularly harassing to the Catholic author, dedicated as he is to the vitalizing of Catholic philosophy by means of the drama. This is because the utterances of the pulpit must be presented on the stage without benefit of pulpit if the verities of theatre are to be maintained. Messrs. Trivett and Lynch, of the Drama Faculty at Fordham University, in the ensuing article have collaborated in a practical approach to the problem of theme and theatre, but it is an approach through the portals of metaphysics.]

THERE are two kinds of Catholic plays—plays by Catholics and plays about Catholics. As the term "Catholic Play" is used by most persons, it is much to be feared that they find it impossible to think of anything but the latter part of the label. This is more than a harmless, academic distinction. It is one of the major difficulties with many of the playwrights and litterateurs of the Church. Let us look into the matter.

Newman, in his "Grammar of Assent," has, in a classical way, made the distinction between the abstract idea and the real apprehension of, and assent to, that idea by the whole man. It is quite possible for a great truth, as enunciated by the individual on the surface of the mind and on the tip of the tongue, to be entirely anemic and ineffective. For truth, to have the quality of life, must rise out of personal experience, be an answer to it, and must be expressed in terms of it.

For example: we might ask ourselves under what circumstances we appreciate the full beauty of the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ. Certainly, among other things, in terms of the reality of human friendship or the human community. In a word, the necessities of our thinking and living are such that we cannot afford to make the abstract or the supernatural a vague addition to the natural world, almost a superfluity so far as it is concerned. The supernatural is not something apart from ourselves and other things. We and things are an intrinsic part of it. Finally, it is most important to grasp this: he who penetrates best into the depth and the true direction of the natural world that strikes his eyes and ears is advantageously disposed better to understand the supernatural. In very brief, theologians do not waste their time when they serve an apprenticeship in the sciences and the humanities.

What is the relation of all this to the drama? We are

likely to be very intent upon, and enthusiastic about, the staging of Catholic ideas and Catholic dogma, or a religious theory of life, without capably expressing them in terms of the realities with which we and our contemporaries have so much to do. It is a fault to be found in much Catholic poetry. The result is often a very facile type of writing that has no effect whatsoever because it has no sincerity. By sincerity we are not here concerned with the moral version of the virtue but with that literary quality which involves a real and profound possession and creation of characters and of things. Sincerity in this sense means that we must start from the ground up and not the reverse.

We will be altogether banal, for example, in our presentation of the supernatural until, by a long apprenticeship, we have become thoroughly intimate with the natural. We are too fond of the "thesis" play which, going no further than thesis, stops short of being real art.

Jacques Maritain has suggested to the Christian painter that he stop all work on the tabernacle lamp and concentrate for a long period on the creation of grapes and fish. The implication, of course, is that we be humble and devout and intelligent enough to bring to holy things and to the service of the Lord a skill and craft that will do justice to so severe a task as the art of dogma and the supernatural involves. For the drama is a craft, one of the most difficult, requiring the mastery of a hundred things: of words and their colorings; of rhythm in the single line; of rhythm in dialogue; of movement; structure and design in the whole; of character; of the ordinary and the more subtle movements of the heart; of that acting which involves years of training of the arms and legs and lips and even the arching of the eye-brow; of speech; of scenic design; and of how many other things.

The whole thing obviously demands humility and patience, as all art demands these virtues. We cannot approach Broadway with the conviction that the world has been waiting for us all these years and the new dawn is at last come for the drama. Although it goes without saying that we have the truth and a message, yet Broadway has for us a message of its own, and it is one of the craftsmanship of long years.

The danger with the ordinary student enthusiast who is told of the great need of a Catholic drama is obviously that he will rush immediately into the world of

explicit dogma without the humble preparation that has been suggested. How can such dogmatic violence be controlled?

The dramatic program of my own Fordham University for the current year may well serve as a fairly concrete and practical specimen of real workmanship prefacing the approach to the tabernacle. A first-hand knowledge of the history of the drama and its many phases is encouraged. One group is engaged in the study and production of the classical Greek plays. Streamlined adaptations of three masterpieces will be produced, two of them in the original Greek. One of them, *"The Clouds"* of Aristophanes, will be the first of a series of four short-version comedies in a language evening, the other three to be drawn from Plautus in Latin, Moliere in French, and Gilbert and Sullivan in the English. A "Communist" evening is planned Clifford Odet's, *"Waiting for Lefty"* will be presented in company with a Catholic play, *"Had Lefty Come,"* which is meant to be a model adapting of the primitive power of the Red theatre by a Catholic author with his own point to preach. Mr. Emmet Lavery is conducting a seminar for a group of the more promising students in the art of play construction. The fruit of this seminar, a group of plays drawn from any subject under

the sun, will be presented in a one-act-play contest. Finally—and the use of the word finally is deliberate—the university staged a Catholic drama based on the life of the martyr, Edmund Campion, *"Who Ride on White Horses"*. It was written by a student and thought excellent enough for production on Broadway.

This program of Fordham University is intended to point a generally healthy direction to any potential Catholic workshop or experimental theatre. At the same time its limitations are humbly acknowledged. It is felt, however, that all possible improvement should be in the direction already indicated, the institution of courses, departments, programs, all concerned with fundamental technique of speech, designing, construction, etc., in a word, the training of an artist.

But does all that has been said here both in and between the lines mean that there should be no such thing as a "thesis" play, *explicitly* teaching what the Catholic and Catholicism is? Perhaps, in the ideal order, there should not be. In a period of relaxation, that is, one in which the Church would not be forced forever to the construction or fortresses of defense, men could take their theology for granted, as something woven into their very veins, and could with *Saint Francis* sit

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TRUTH IN THE DRAMA

THE Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P., Editor of *The Catholic World*, has occasioned so many reflections in CATHOLIC THEATRE that we might well regard him as an associate editor. Equipped with a notable sense of the dramatic in his outlook upon life and history, Father Gillis again and again strikes from the brilliant anvil of his discourses, particularly those over the nationwide "Catholic Hour" broadcast, intellectual sparks that burst into flame in purlieus other than his own.

Again Father Gillis has furnished a motif for Catholic Theatre. Speaking over the radio in his last series on the "Catholic Hour," he asserted, among other things, that little is to be gained by writers and thinkers in glossing over uncomfortable truths which have an important bearing upon the course of history and closely touch fundamental principles. He pleaded for courage in facing truth when it is encountered, and he castigated those writers who, in meeting "an unedifying fact," seem to "shy away from it with the nervousness of a skittish horse." He added that the "four Evangelists are not

so timorous" and that "if the Gospel story had been committed to the pen of one of our modern hush-hush school of pietistic writers, I doubt if we would ever have heard of the story of Judas, apostate suicide apostle, and I am quite sure we would not have known that St. Peter in a miserable funk cursed and swore that he had never known Jesus Christ."

Here is a thought for the Catholic dramatist. Actually, Father Gillis was thinking specifically of the playwright, since his portrayal of ancient Biblical events in his radio series was formulated in the dramatic mode. After satisfying the demands of propriety, the playwright who draws his material from history, if he is to be sincere, honest and effective, should dare to hew close to fundamental facts. It is his right, of course, to project life on the stage as he sees it. His interpretation may prove distorted, but if his facts are faithfully set down, the quarrel with him will be intellectual and not moral. This question impinges on Catholic Theatre in that the Church's history, is replete with dramatic events which,

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PUPPETRY AND SPIRITUAL VALUES

By MARGARET I. MILLER

[Catholic Theatre encompasses all branches of the dramatic art. The Juvenile Theatre is an essential part of the integral picture, constituting as it does a training ground by which children can be prepared for later work in the College and Adult Theatre. The Puppet Theatre is rapidly becoming an invaluable section of the preparatory theatre and in this article Miss Miller stresses how puppetry can contribute to the spiritual as well as the dramatic development of young children.]

JANE is at the in-between age, the age that sits around dreaming of the styles and glamor of the newest Hollywood star. She is old enough to be disturbed by questions that life around her is forcing upon her, yet young enough to be satisfied by life's surface glitter. Such is a problem met by the mother of the pre-adolescent girl.

Jim is moon-struck. He does not get the punch out of the simple field games of the younger boys and does not quite fit into the sports of the older ones. He broods around the house over the glories of his latest football or baseball hero. The modern father of this modern boy would not be so perturbed over the problem if his son restricted his worship to his athletic heroes, but when it includes the stars of gangster escapades in motion pictures the father sees possible danger ahead for his son's mental health.

To Catholic parents, these problems threaten for their children greater evils than mere abnormal forms of day-dreaming. They see on the road ahead moral and spiritual wreckage resulting from too much personality inversion.

The solution for all parents, from a natural and supernatural standpoint, lies in interesting their offspring in creative work, both of the mind and the hands.

The parents of some eighth graders I know found the answer to the problem in the field of puppetry. It was Christmas time when Anne scornfully tilted up her nose at a book she had received on "Children's Christmas in Many Lands."

"Why not dramatize the story and make your own marionettes?" her mother suggested.

"But we don't know how to write plays, and we don't know anything about art, so how could we make a puppet play?" the girl came back.

But Anne lay awake that night thinking about the suggestion and next day told her companions of the idea. True, both from the standpoint of dramatic and puppet technique, the play they created was crude, but it had been engaging enough for them to work through to a glorious finish. From Christmas to Easter they modelled clay, smeared themselves in plaster-paris,

gummed their fingers with plastic wood, stained their hands with oil and poster paints, and even tore a few finger nails with pliers. But they all sensed an exultant thrill of accomplishment. They found less and less time for the Friday night picture shows and, therefore, were able to put odd nickels, dimes, and quarters into the puppetry fund. The Christmas play was a bit out of season at Eastertide, but nobody cared.

Even fairy tales took on a new lustre as the group ventured into its second production and attempted an elaborate stage-setting for Cinderella's ball, although the elaboration consisted of a few sheets of dime-store cellophane, a few Christmas bulbs resurrected from the family store-room, to supply the lighting, and gowns that grew out of odds and ends of silks, satins, and velvets from attic trunks.

Over and above the fairy tales, for the Catholic child there stand library shelves of lives of the saints ready to be dramatized. In fact, Henri Gheon has done two religious plays for children, "The Journey of the Three Kings" and "St. Nicholas." If these seem too infantile for the sophisticate of the early teens there is one saint on whom a wealth of material has been done and is ageless in his appeal to every age. He is the little poor man, Francis of Assisi. May Byron has written a brief and simple biography of Francis that easily could be carried into drama. Too, there are Joan Windam's "Six O'Clock Saints," "More Saints for Six O'Clock," and "The King's Christmas Present" that would lend themselves beautifully to puppet plays.

Parents might ask the question, "What, specifically, is there in it for our children, other than a substitute for their day-dreams and reveries? Specifically, how does puppetry engage all the powers of our children?"

Puppetry not only engages and develops all the natural faculties of children, but, if properly directed, may develop their supernatural powers. Four natural faculties, the senses, imagination, emotions, and intellect work together in planning a play, not only in terms of dramatic technique, but in the visualizing and designing of the settings, the costumes, and the expression of the puppets themselves. Learning the lines of the play

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UNDER THE MARQUEE

This column of news, notes and comments is for the information of our members and the other readers of this magazine. To facilitate the handling of such material we request that groups or individuals desiring to forward data for use in *Under the Marquee* send same to the CATHOLIC THEATRE CONFERENCE, Office of the Secretary, the Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C., labelled "Marquee." We are interested in the activities of all our members and prospective members and we will use, in so far as possible, all material relating to such activities if such is provided us.

If there is any doubt as to the pace of the 1939-40 season of Catholic Theatre a very rapid glance at the Marquis' desk will dispel it presto . . . The stacked reports have trickled in from as far as New Zealand and as near as Washington . . . So, First Nighters, better take a nice comfortable easy chair there in the lobby and hope for a long intermission . . . because the *entre acte* chatter has much to cover. . . . If first things don't come first, be patient and forbearing, because lobby small talk is desultory at best . . . Already we hear someone over there mentioning the Catholic Theatre Guild's production of "Shadow and Substance" in Los Angeles on February 3 . . . We'll hear more about that group if we stay out here in the lobby long enough . . . There's a whisper about the "Murder in the Cathedral" production just off the chest . . . or chests . . . of the Twin College Players in Atchison, Kans. . . . St. Scholastica and St. Benedict's Colleges to be specific . . . Given first at the former college, it was taken to Municipal Auditorium in Kansas City at the invitation of the Holy Name Society of Kansas City . . . Which reminds that Robert Speaight, the English actor, whose generosity the past couple of years has led him into American Catholic Theatre as the Guest Leading Man par excellence, will appear at the Catholic University of America again, come March 24, 25, and 26. He will take up the roll he created for the London production of "Eliot's Great Vehicle," which ran three years. . . . And while we're on the subject of the Drama School at Catholic U. . . . about which there are some pictures and words to match elsewhere in this issue . . . we can't forget to applaud again the ambitious and panoramic "Yankee Doodle Boy," the 24-scene musical based on the life of George M. Cohan, which the C. U. Drama School unfolded before a wide public shortly before the holidays . . . And the students did it all themselves, except that Mr. Cohan, who is somewhat familiar to theatre folk, by spending a lifetime on the stage, yielded the material . . . song and story . . . for the opus . . . An attempt to encompass Mr. Cohan's days in the theatre is a challenge to the genius and capacities of any dramatist or dramatic organization . . . C. U. met the challenge successfully . . . Walter Kerr a faculty member, and Leo Brady (Brother Orchid) slaved collaboratively in producing the script . . . Mr. Cohan assisted with his kindness, moral support, permission to render his better known song hits, and with his compelling personality which was witnessed by a distinguished audience at the third performance when "Yankee Doodle Boy" himself flew from New York to the Capital to see the show . . . We could go on and on, but you will have to wait for that ten-volume history of Catholic Theatre, to get all the glamorous details . . . "Brother Orchid," Leo Brady's peregrinating play, premiered by Catholic U. last year, landed in Pittsburgh in January, and some thirty seven other places . . . our adding machine hasn't caught up yet . . . and reports indicate great interest there in the Catholic Theatre Guild's presentation of the comedy . . . One performance benefitted the fighting Finns, and from what we hear the Catholic Theatre Guild's production of the play also was of benefit to that fine group's prestige . . . It might be said, the Guilders in Pittsburgh are preoccupied with the menace of totalitarianism . . . They opened their season with Norman MacOwan's "Glorious Morning," a beautifully written play set in an imaginary totalitarian State of the communal garden variety and describing the idyllic (?) life therein . . . "Glorious Morning" was first seen in London, in 1938, and is being looked at by other Catholic groups here . . . We said something about New Zealand early in this session . . . we weren't exaggerating. There is a report here about a production of Martinez Sierra's "Kingdom of God," in Wellington this month . . . It is to be given by the New Zealand Catholic Players in connection with the National Eucharistic Congress "down under". . . The Foreign De-

partment further contributes the note that a gallant troupe of Chinese actors entertained the people of . . . of . . . just a moment, we'll get it straight . . . Ningyuanfu, Sze, China . . . to raise funds for public welfare . . . some of the money was turned over by the players to the Vicar Apostolic for the Mission Home in . . . well, that place . . . and . . . whoops, a western wind has blown the chatter back to the U. S. A. and we hear now that Fordham University has been riding on white horses or something . . . wait, reception is very bad . . . Oh, yes . . . It develops that the students at New York's great Jesuit University also have done some writing of a high order and have come up with a stream-lined version of the life of Blessed Edmund Campion, which is a sort of theatrical observance of the Jesuits' fourth centenary . . . The title? "Who Ride on White Horses." . . . Co-authored by Richard Breen and Harry Schnibbe, the Campion play, given in the Heckscher Theatre in downtown New York, was one of the productions which merited the praise of Mrs. Hallie Flanagan for its use of the Living Newspaper technique . . . Young Mr. Breen, it must be remembered, is the author of "The Dream-slayers," that striking little one-acter on Communism which Fordham University Press now publishes . . . Both he and Mr. Schnibbe turned out the Campion vehicle under the direction of Emmet Lavery . . . and to distinguish it further, Mr. Speaight took the leading role . . . and did it, according to our representative at the production, with his usual virtuosity and polish. . . . See aforementioned ten-volume history of Catholic Theatre for further details also . . . Way down South in New Orleans a jubilarian dramatic director is to be honored . . . He is Dr. Alfred J. Bonomo, who steers affairs dramatic at Loyola University of the South and has done so for the past quarter of a century . . . In his honor, a gold medal will be awarded annually for the best individual dramatic performance of the year at the university . . . Dr. Bonomo at one time had under his direction the Very Rev. Thomas Shields, S. J., present Provincial of the Southern Province of the Society of Jesus, the Rev. Harold A. Gaudin, S. J., a former President of Loyola, and the Rev. Warren J. Barker, S. J., now Loyola's Dean . . . All three held spears in a play called "The Wheels of Justice," directed by Dr. Bonomo . . . The jubilarian is a graduate of Georgetown U. . . . And Prince Gallitizin positively will be the subject of a dramatic pageant . . . A priest—the Rev. Albert A. Gartland, Assistant Pastor of St. John Gualbert's Church, Johnstown, Pa., and Associate Editor of the Altoona Edition of *The Register*, has finished a script on the famed Prince-Missionary which won him the contest the Altoona Diocese conducted to get a suitable manuscript for a pageant planned in May to commemorate the centenary of the death of Prince Demetrius Augustine Gallitizin, pioneer missionary of the Alleghenies. . . . There's been drama in them thar Alleghenies because of Father Gallitizin, and Father Gartland is to be congratulated for making the most of it. . . . Best of luck to the Altoona Diocese in its pageant project . . .

Since this is a circuitous column, it might not now be amiss to mention something of the Conference's Play Cycle plans for this year. . . . The New York and Chicago areas are busily at work preparing for their second annual Cycles . . . and close upon their heels are the steadily developing plans for the first Cycle in the Washington district. . . . Details are rather patchy at present, although we do happen to know that eight groups are engineering the Cycle in the Capital . . . We expect momentous things from the Cycle Committees in N. Y. and Chi., this year . . . More about those and them in next issue . . . Did you hear . . . and probably you did . . . that the venturesome Mr. Maurice Evans is about to pluck from under our noses something of our very own . . . but since we Catholics in the theatre seem to have been somewhat remiss, or cold, in the matter of exploiting

Housman's "Little Plays of St. Francis," we can have no legitimate protest if Mr. Evans seizes upon them as further fields for his conquering genius . . . As a matter of fact, we wish Mr. Evans good luck . . . and offer him our thanks for spying the gold that glistens in the "Little Plays." . . . Catholic Theatre, in some respects, still tags along behind until our brethren in the theatre and outside the fold demonstrate for us what fine plays we have, Grandma . . . Martin B. Fallon, Acting Dean of Drama at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, has been named Director of "Veronica's Veil," the well-known Passion Play of the Passionist Fathers in Union City, N. J. . . . And on the subject of appointments, the Rev. Henry J. Lenahan, of the Cathedral College faculty in New York, has been named by Archbishop Spellman, Director of the Catholic Theatre movement in that city. . . . That's the "White List's" parent, you know, and under Father Lenahan's direction we are sure it will continue its valuable work. . . .

Thanks are due Courtenay Savage, author, playwright and radio scenarist of Chicago . . . A recent number of *Columbia*, the K. of C. mouthpiece, carried a plea by Mr. Savage for Catholic writers to use their heritage in the weaving of plays . . . He cited that heritage, in part, and offered it as a counteracting influence for the poisonous stuff sprayed about by subversive groups . . . Mr. Savage is a member, and a good friend, of the Catholic Theatre Conference. . . . We need more of your writing, Mr. Savage . . .

Mrs. Flanagan was right . . . Holy Cross College, in Worcester, Mass., is employing the Living Newspaper device to dramatize the Papal Encyclicals . . . That is Catholic Theatre with capital letters . . . when your plays are not only inspired by the voice of the Vicar of Christ, but in fact, bring to life on the stage the utterance in papal documents in . . . No, my dear sirs, Mr. Lavery has not holed up to write another play . . . He is very much in the trenches . . . and, we suspect, is writing plays, too . . . For one thing, he is Assistant, directing Mrs. Flanagan at Vassar in theatre research based on the records of Federal Theatre . . . for another, as we have hinted, he is a conspicuous figure at Fordham conducting playwrighting seminars, directing, being as always very much of a dynamic force in the advancement of vital theatre. . . . Anent the Lavery brain child, "The First Legion," reports from Buenos Aires indicate that offspring has wandered away from its kith and kin down to Argentina, where it is doing very well, thank you . . . and is undergoing translation . . . painlessly, we are told . . . into Portuguese, which foreshadows a trip to Brazil . . . And a phone call has just let us in on the knowledge that the ubiquitous Mr. Lavery is to direct his drama on Father Damian . . . "Kamiano" . . . to be rendered by Georgetown University's Mask and Bauble Club in February . . . Pittsburgh's Catholic Theatre Guild unveiled "Kamiano" last year . . . And so the list of panoramic-historic Catholic plays grows . . . Catholic colleges do march in this Catholic Theatre procession . . . God bless 'em. . . .

Our short-wave set is in operation again with a news note from Erin . . . One of the results of the desire to encourage the growth of native theatrical art there is the establishment of local theatres in different areas of Ireland . . . Foremost is the Birr Little Theatre . . . And, whoa . . . more, as the newspaper reporters say . . . Carroll's "Shadow and Substance" was scheduled by that group, but lo, . . . it never happened, although everything was set for the first night. . . . Local objection to the play's theme caused producers to withdraw the production at the last moment . . . The Abbey did it first in Dublin, as we all know. . . . If we're not too flip, mayhap the play's substance became a shadow at production time.

We recommend a full reading of Father Gillis' last series of discourses over the "Catholic Hour" . . . Theatre folk will find the sermons right down their blocks . . . The National Council of Catholic Men in Washington will be glad to send copies, we're sure . . . Stage door entrances in Chicago are getting something new in the way of bulletin boards. Through the efforts of the Catholic Actors Guild a framed directory of the hours of Sunday Masses and special services at the Cathedral of the Holy Name, the "Actors Church," has been placed at the stage entrances of all legitimate theatres. . . . Now here we are . . . The Catholic Theatre Guild in Los Angeles counts some 900 members . . . and in the course of the season is offer-

ing its patrons 10 major events . . . These features include lectures . . . Bishop Kelley, of Oklahoma City and Tulsa, Dr. Paul Furley, Catholic U. sociologist, Maisie Ward, of Sheed and Ward . . . the Glacier Priest, Father Bernard R. Hubbard, S.J. . . . and plays like "Shadow and Substance," as was mentioned, "My Heart's in the Highlands," by William Saroyan, young San Jose playwright, who has another hit currently on Broadway, . . . and "Cradle Song" by Sierra. . . . Nice words come from J. A. McLaughlin, President of the Theatre Art Guild of Ottawa. . . . "You are to be complimented on the interesting and instructive issue of CATHOLIC THEATRE," says he. "Among others, 'Under the Marquee' contains a good deal of encouragement for struggling groups—struggling as much to crystallize their ideals as to get established financially". . . . Miss Clancy's article, "Give 'Em Blue Sky" in last issue, Mr. McLaughlin says, stimulated interest in publicity in his Guild . . . He adds the Guild has a laboratory class on acting technique, an active committee on stage work . . . as well as study circles on playwrighting . . . and publicity . . . and experimental make-up . . . Father Owen Dudley's "Masterful Monk" and "The Late Christopher Bean" are some of the matters attended to competently by this promising group in recent months. . . . A full-length play and three nights of one-act plays are on the agenda for the coming weeks. . . . The Guild is also doing short plays for soldiers . . . so the war, which has touched Canada, is rendered less miserable because of this generous group's efforts . . .

We find the Tracomian Players in Cleveland busy as usual. . . . "Far Off Hills" is already part of their season's history as will be Barry's "Joyous Season" come press time. . . .

And so arrives the winter of our discontent . . . because the lights have dipped and the curtain is ready to rise on the next quarter of our Catholic Theatre season . . . We mustn't miss it, because the Marquis likes to gossip with you between acts . . . Our suggestion for the quarter: try to plan your program of major productions next season in such a way as to include a spot for at least one of the successful new plays premiered by such groups as the players at Fordham, Catholic University, and Holy Cross . . . They have pioneered with these vehicles and you may profit much from their experience and experiences in the precarious work of initiating new Catholic scripts. They have reduced considerably the necessity of gambling with untried plays and can serve as your proving ground . . . Isn't it a nice sort of reciprocity and a real cooperative move in the cause of Catholic Theatre to exploit the new dramas these groups have had the resourcefulness, energy and courage to introduce "cold" to a critical public? . . . Until the Spring then . . .

THE MARQUIS.



Cycles

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The lack of original Catholic plays was stressed. Fordham's one-act was the only original contribution. It was emphasized, however, that by supplying Catholic playwrights with an opportunity to present new plays, the stimulus was given for creative work.

It was agreed at the outset that the colleges individually would be responsible for their performances—cost of theatre, royalty, transportation of scenery, stagehands, and sale of tickets.

The Barbizon-Plaza Theatre was selected because of its audience-appeal—its central location, size and comfort of auditorium, and professional atmosphere. The manager of the theatre was most cooperative, and at the conclusion of the cycle it was generally agreed that this choice was a wise one in spite of the expense involved. Tickets for the majority of orchestra seats were sold at \$1, for rear of orchestra; and balcony, 50 cents.

The chief difficulty presented by use of the Barbizon was the need of telescoping performances. Rehearsal time, while available to some extent, was valuable, and the rapid succession of plays could not have been managed without the kindly cooperation of all the colleges. The souvenir program for the cycle was managed by Mrs. Wyatt, who secured the services of a paid advertising solicitor. The funds received by the Central Committee for advertisements in the joint program and sponsor-series and individual performance tickets were used to defray the expense of the program, publicity, and theatre gratuities. A small surplus on hand in June the colleges decided to leave with the treasurer for a 1940 fund.

St. Elizabeth's College, of Convent, N. J., was the only participant that printed its own program, and because of its location it was able to secure many advertisements which could not have been solicited by the New York program.

Excellent publicity was secured in *The Catholic World* by Mrs. Wyatt; considerable space was also given to the program by *The Catholic News*, *The Brooklyn Tablet*, and New York daily and Sunday papers. This latter publicity was submitted by individual colleges in addition to that sent out by the secretary. Two paid advertisements were inserted.

Because the individual colleges assumed entire financial responsibility for their performances, it is not possible to tell accurately just what the cycle cost. The theatre

charge, \$500, was divided four times, and on the evening of May 8, for the one-act plays, three times again. The College of St. Elizabeth, which had the largest audience, cannot give an exact idea of this project because two other performances of the play were given at the college and a sum total of all expenses, including the director, was taken. Their total income represented approximately \$875, and total expenses \$800.

Fordham University—which had the least in outlay, because it had no expense for royalty, costumes, scenery, or coach—lost \$7 on their venture.

The College of New Rochelle stood a comparatively heavy loss on its production, but it explains that this was due to the repetition of a play given three times before, and to restrictions regarding the late return to college of resident students—errors they hope to overcome in another attempt.

It was evident the financial success of the productions depended upon individual college support. The general

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Enter Director

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set, or by having his characters bless themselves before sitting down to table—but against a background, abstract, symbolic, or suggestive, as you will, which will complement the essential meaning of a Catholic playwright's thought.

Lacking Catholic plays in such a form (although there are always the tentative gropings of Eliot and Sayers,) what is the director to practice on? Let him try Shakespeare and the Greeks, in whose plays the moral nature of man is emphatic, until he shall find a method of projecting that nature theatrically which will become available to the playwright. It always has seemed to me to be a distortion of Shakespeare to present him realistically. It is obvious from *The Family Reunion* that T. S. Eliot is begging for a director who will teach him how to say, in terms that will be effective for an audience, what he so courageously insists upon saying.

And when the director has taken the playwright's hand and led him into the promised land, it will be the latter's job to work at the soil toward harvest.

Only one word of caution: directors who dare experimentation in the face of a current philosophy always wind up in concentration camps.

Look at Meierhold. I am making my reservation now.

Of Equal Dust

(Continued from Page 12)

MICHAEL. Hendrek—Gabriel—Hendrek— (He shrieks with his pain.)

HENDREK. By God, keep quiet! Do you want them to hear? You'll have them on our neck with your damned whining.

MICHAEL. We'll all be killed! They'll tear us to pieces.

HENDREK. Shut up! Shut up!

GABRIEL. Hendrek—Hendrek—

HENDREK. I can't stand this. This is worse than death, this waiting. Always I hear those noises downstairs—that fire outside. Gabriel, friend, let us go. Give the word.

MICHAEL. Punch him down, knock him down! We have no leaders. Get me out of here! Save yourself, Hendrek, beat the Nigger away! He's no leader, he's no leader. Beat him away. He's a Nigger! He wants to kill us all.

[Hendrek listens in bewilderment, then strides forward menacingly toward Michael]

GABRIEL. Hendrek, it is—it is an insult to call a man a Negro? [Hendrek pauses a little, then swings around and looks for a long moment at Gabriel.]

GABRIEL. Yes, Hendrek. I am a Negro. (There is a pause. Gabriel sees and recognizes the sudden disdain vainly concealed. After a moment, his head drops, as he sees his cause is lost. Hendrek walks over to the window. Michael begins softly to sob. Gradually his sobs are louder and Hendrek arises explosively.)

HENDREK. I'm getting out. (He walks over to the table, picks up his gun and starts to exit. Gabriel is still at the door.)

GABRIEL. No, Hendrek. I forbid it, I command you to stay. I am still the leader.

HENDREK. Forbid—command. You are no commander here. Step aside.

GABRIEL (pleading). No. We must help undo our wrong, we must. It means life to scores of them out there. We know the section. We can help better than others. They still may listen to us, still may stop them killing. We may stem the tide.

HENDREK. Stand aside.

MICHAEL. That's right, Hendrek—make him stand aside, make him.

GABRIEL. No. Think of those people whose lives are ours.

[Hendrek reaches forward a peremptory hand. There is a scuffle, a shot, Gabriel sinks into the chair he has just left, gasping. Hendrek looks at him a little.]

HENDREK (almost contritely). Are you—hurt?

GABRIEL. This has done it. Here is the end—no more sky—nor smell of earth—no feel of dust—nor sound of wind. Sorrow runs through me like a strange song—weaving a garland of grieving thoughts. No more love—nor hate. The grass, maybe, will grow through me now as through white men. You—Hendrek—my friend—

MICHAEL. Wait, Hendrek! What is that smell? There's smoke. There again—the building is on fire.

[Hendrek exits briefly—then returns.]

HENDREK. It is so. The building must have been burning most of the time. It's a trap.

MICHAEL. Help me, Hendrek, don't let me burn! Help me! I'm your kind. Help me. See—I can almost walk—I wanted you to go all along.

[Hendrek looks at Gabriel, who is looking at crucifix, then at Michael. Abruptly he strides over to Michael, lifts him and carries him slowly over to door. There panic overcomes him. He flings Michael down and is gone. Michael crawls as best he can, reaches the door, with agonized writhings, then collapses, groaning, suddenly realizing the futility of the attempt. Gabriel has remained seated throughout all this action. He contemplates the crucifix, strangely fixed. Smoke begins to seep into the room in increasing quantity. The ominous crackling of the flames can be heard more plainly. With a breathless sigh, Gabriel slips off the chair and kneels face forward in front of the crucifix. Michael presently looks up and around, surveys the scene for a moment, then slowly, ever so slowly, crawls forward until the two figures, black and white, are kneeling before the crucifix in a swirl of smoke.]

CURTAIN

King's Menu

(Continued from Page 8)

they are now supplying local broadcasters with commercial scripts. The most outstanding work to date in the field of radio has been a series of half-hour scripts based on the lives of great Catholic literary figures. Cardinal Newman, G. K. Chesterton, Coventry Patmore, and others have been dramatized.

All drama activities on the university campus are under the supervision of the Rev. Gilbert Hartke, O. P. The remainder of the staff includes Mr. Kerr, author of twenty plays and former "gag" writer for Edgar Bergen, whose latest dramatic writing is now under consideration for Broadway production; Mrs. Josephine McGarry Callan, from Northwestern University, instructor in interpretation and acting, who coaches the players; Mr. Brown, art and technical director, who plans and mounts each production. Radio production is handled by Wells Church, of the National Broadcasting Company. Other courses are handled by the Rev. Brendan Larnen, O. P., Secretary-Treasurer of the CATHOLIC THEATRE CONFERENCE; Miss Mary Olive O'Connell, director of the Children's Division; Dr. Alan Fry, head of the Philology Department of the University, and the Rev. Dr. Robert Slavin, O. P., of the Philosophy Department.

Behind the splendid program of public entertainment goes on the routine school work of bringing the lore and knowledge of the theatre to the students, with, of course, special emphasis on the Catholic aspects of the past and the stimulation of Catholic hopes of the future.

In the projected new world of Catholic Theatre there is no assurance of success as a means of Catholic Action unless both "Catholic" and "Theatre" are proportionately instilled into the coming theatrical generation. The methods and effects of the drama are various and far-flung, intricate and technical. The Catholic actor and the Catholic playwright and the Catholic technician of tomorrow must know Sophocles and St. Thomas Aquinas, strange stage-fellows indeed, and yet no stranger than the merging of Church and Theatre after the wide gap which has separated them in recent times.

It is a commentary on the Catholic regard for the theatre in the past generation that the finest drama on a Catholic theme has come from the Anglican pen of Thomas Stearns Eliot. The courses of study at the Catholic University and the simultaneous effort along other college and little theatre fronts make certain that the great plays of the future will be Catholic and that the great Catholic plays will be written by Catholics.

Repertory Dares

(Continued from Page 10)

ing the return trip Sunday. And tired though they were, hungry most of the time, over-worked and worried—the players loved it.

They were really grand through it all, that company. They worked—worked to the breaking point—and never thought of quitting. There was no distinction between stage hands and actors. They were one and the same. This week's leading lady worked on costumes last show. One night the curtain was ready when it was discovered the female lead hadn't yet arrived. Bloodhounds and a searching posse hunted her down in the kitchen, where she was finishing up the dinner dishes before the show. It was quite remarkable when you stop to consider it. They weren't professionals, whose job it is to act, and who did it as a job. Here were people poured molten from society's crucible—clerks, stenographers, teachers, actors, kids just out of college, and their professors. Dreams were all they had in common, but as they tore themselves from the prosaic world and surrendered to their dreams they became fused, they grew, and strengthened one another. Heterogeneous as they were, there has never been a group of people more devoted than they.

There was only one hitch. Things weren't going so well in the department of the exchequer. Not that this was something new or startling, you know, but it gradually became apparent that sooner or later the larder would run out, or the spring dry, the sheriff in, or some other equally distasteful eventuality. They had taken the theatre with assurances that predecessors had attracted audiences of six hundred or more. Midway through the season it was concluded those houses must have been heavily papered—no brilliant solution to the rapidly vanishing budget. In short, one fine summer morning the Blackfriars' Repertory Company, doing only the best of plays, woke up to find itself broke. Now Blackfriars, as a rule, don't bother about such trifles as money. In fact, they're notorious for it, that is, on refusing to worry about money. But there comes a time. When peanut butter sandwiches fail to satisfy yearning appetites, when stewed tomatoes blush to put in another appearance, the time has come, the Walrus, (hungry Walrus) said, to think of many things. First and foremost, how to feed the angry mob. Second, how to dodge the bill collectors. For a while it was a sort of game, a riddle, and everybody had loads of fun guessing. They fell back on mental suggestion, pass all the real problems off as myths they could forget.

But that was no better until the mythical gods smiled. As a matter of fact, they laughed. It wasn't very nice, but they did, they actually laughed.

A telegram was received late one night from Father Nagle, who had been called up to Cliff Haven in the middle of the week on urgent business. It read something as follows:

"Assemble company for arrival. Important news." They thought it ambiguous, too. So the only thing to do was to "assemble the company for arrival." Over peanut butter sandwiches—there were no more tomatoes—they waited. Came the arrival—Father Nagle, accompanied by Father Randall, and a baked ham big enough to feed the Russian army on a basis of ample equality.

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Truth in Drama

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unfortunately, if naturally, have been seared by the fires of debate and controversy. The timorous playwright, as Father Gillis implies, will shy away from such world-shaking subjects as that of a Savonarola or a Galileo and thus leave untouched much material for great and moving drama.

It is heartening to remember that the Church herself has no fear of history rightly recorded. As Father Gillis suggests and shows, the playwright who will plunge into the Bible and into the history of the Christian era will discover magnificent dramatic treasures. It is most unfortunate if anxiety lest some of these dramatic happenings compromise the prestige of the Church frightens our authors away from at least an examination of the latent dramas folded away in the layers of time. Rather let the Catholic playwright lay claim to the rich mine of the Church's past as his very own, cut deep into her motherlode of culture, heroism and valor and return to the surface with the glistening ore of persons and things unrivalled in world history for glamor, struggle and idealism, the stuff of significant drama in any age. It is for the playwright to refine that ore into a play and so long as the nature of the crude deposit remains unchanged in the refining process, the playwright need have no misgivings that the finished product of his genius will be false to his faith, his church, or to truth.

Cycles

(Continued from Page 18)

Catholic theatre audience, which the Conferences aims to create, must be built by succeeding cycles of equal merit.

At a meeting last June several suggestions were made for a more successful cycle in 1940. It was agreed by all those participating that the colleges individually were well pleased with the experiment and were anxious to carry the movement further.

The question of an earlier date was discussed, and the consensus was that a date early in March or late in February would work in with college programs more easily. It is interesting to note in the connection that the participants of the Chicago cycle arrived at the same conclusion.

Publicity and program, it was agreed, could be aided materially by the assistance of the colleges, and committees to help with this work should be named well in advance of another cycle.

Mrs. Wyatt suggested that a subscription fund be built up which could be divided equally among the participants to defray at least part of the rental cost. There was in this suggestion, however, no intention of creating a central expense fund for production costs.

The possibility of profit through an intensive advertising solicitation was exemplified by the St. Elizabeth program, and it was evident that this feature was worth concentration in the preparations another year.

It is also believed those colleges not directly participating in productions might well be organized for publicity and program work. In this way, a more definite sense of their collaboration with the movement might be achieved.

The undiminished enthusiasm of the college groups to carry forward the aim of a Catholic theatre, was evident at the close of the first season, and it is hoped that a fruitful seed has been planted.

In October, 1938, a meeting of schools and dramatic groups interested in the production of a cycle was called at Loyola Community Theatre, Chicago. Out of this original meeting emerged the permanent organization composed of fifteen groups known as "charter member groups" of the Chicago Catholic Theatre Cycle. They consisted of five college or university, four high-school, and six little theatre or parish groups. Several of these found it impracticable to participate in the production of plays but remained as members and rendered valuable assistance in the work. The eventual

presentation of plays was done by four colleges and five little theatres.

The first committee appointed was one on "organization" and this body formulated a very simple "Articles of Agreement" which the members signed and adopted as the rules and regulations of the organization's existence. These articles merely stated the name and purpose, the officers and their duties, the authority of the officers and the various committees, and the responsibility of the member groups. Since the organization was formed only for the purpose of a single cycle of plays and, since it had no precedent on which to proceed, it was thought advisable to leave most of the details of operation to the discretion of the directors as the work progressed. This simple two-page document took the place of a lengthy Constitution and By-Laws and was found to be adequate for the conduct of the cycle. Each of the charter member groups elected two directors to serve on the executive board of thirty. In most cases the directors consisted of the dramatic director and the business manager of the individual group. These thirty directors conducted all phases of the cycle management.

Permanent committees appointed were "Date and Play Selection," "Budget," "Production," and "Program." The date was set for May and the cycle presented May 10 to 21. This seemed to be an advisable time but experience proved that an earlier date would have had advantages. The activities of the schools at this season, with class plays, preparations for commencement and final examinations, was found to interfere rather seriously with attendance at plays and work on ticket sales. The previous closing events of the season in most of the little theatre and parish groups had a tendency to make the appearance of these groups in the cycle somewhat anti-climactical. For these reasons it is recommended that cycles be presented earlier in the season—say in February or March, although local conditions will probably affect the selection of dates.

The selection of plays was not a serious problem. The Committee on Play Selection recommended a number of plays which would be acceptable but no attempt was made to make the committee's recommendations obligatory. The Board of Directors felt the various dramatic directors were intelligent, discerning people and could be trusted to choose a play for their group which would reflect credit on that group's taste. How well this system worked out is apparent by the list of plays presented in New York as well as in Chicago.

In Chicago the full-length plays were "Murder in the Cathedral," by De Paul University; "The Women Have

Their Way," by Mundelein College; "The Tidings Brought to Mary," by Rosary College; "The First Legion," by Chicago Catholic Men's Club; "Mary of Scotland," by Loyola Community Theatre. One-act plays were "The Bishop's Candlesticks," by Notre Dame Parish Players; "The Pride of Bygone Days," by Barat College; "The Happy Journey," by the Tower Players and "The Rising of the Moon," by The Cathespians. It will be seen from the above that, of the entire list, five of the full-length plays can be classified as directly Catholic in theme, while the three remaining are written about Catholic people or contain some measure of Catholic philosophy. Of the one-act plays, one belongs in the former category, four in the latter and two, while purely secular, at least do not violate Catholic tradition. It is to be regretted perhaps that only three of the plays (two in New York and one in Chicago) were original, and all three of these were one-act plays. The ultimate in play cycles we think, would be the production of all original plays, world premieres if possible. This for the time being is, of course, impractical, but some consideration should be given to the encouragement of Catholic dramatists to write plays for first production in the play cycles so that each cycle could contain at least one original, full-length play. The Chicago cycle group also feels that it should like to see more one-act plays. The response to our one evening of short plays was very good. It is advisable from a practical standpoint in that it makes it possible for more groups to participate and spreads the interest more widely. The Committee on Play Selection insisted that, in casting, no male roles be assigned to women nor female roles to men. This requirement may seem drastic, but it worked no hardships, because the two women's colleges who presented plays requiring male characters were able to borrow men for these parts from men's schools. We are sure that this restriction was appreciated by those of our audiences who have seen young women disporting themselves on the stage in male attire. It would probably be advisable also to allow the Committee on Play Selection the right of censorship over plays to be presented—that is, to give them the final word on the selection of plays. While no difficulties along this line were encountered, there is always the possibility that some play, while not necessarily lacking in Catholic taste, may be of dubious literary merit or be out of character with the other plays in the cycle. It would be well to allow the committee to exercise its control over such an exigency.

A word about the high school's participation. The Chicago cycle had four high-school groups but none of

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Dogma

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back and with Catholic Love write simply though deeply about all things whatsoever, about Sister Moon, and Earth and Water, and Brother Sun and Wind and Fire, and Sister Death. As though the contemplative specially chosen should, like the Carpenter, Christ, with the perfect Catholic love of an archetypal idea, carve out a beautiful chair. So Paul Claudel, in that difficult business of "The Satin Slipper," sat back and told us a story of a soul led by confused ways, even by sin, to a splendid end, a picture of God Himself intricately carving and making many things one.

But, although it may be given to a man, it is hardly ever given to a whole civilization to be contemplative. Today, above all, there is the defensive, and the very legitimate temptation, if not need, to fight for dogma, to insist on the "thesis." Yet, even granted so much, we must take stock of the way we give truth to the world. It would be and is a terrible thing to ruin our great treasure-chest of thought, those fundamental principles which must be a salvation to the world, by telling a poor story or by not knowing human character. If we must be explicit we can be so in the manner of the Greeks. That famous tag at the end of their plays commiserating the universal human lot is powerful and artistic, because it emerges out of and after a piercing *individual* experience. Therefore, if you are intent on saying that there is a God who is a Hound of Heaven pursuing the soul, read "Kristin Lavransdatter" to learn how it is said by an artist in terms of a story of one woman beautifully told, the universal and explicit conclusion deriving all its effectiveness from the pity of Kristin. So your truth will be more definitely seized in the clearer and larger light of *visible* things.

Perhaps it will help to give one more example of this artistic clarity and power that must be our goal. God Himself, with His plan of Redemption, has given our Catholic artist the perfect model for his work. Perhaps He was not satisfied with the simple idea in the mind of Christ that was a consent to His reign; perhaps not with His internal suffering. His body shared *visibly* in it. And He was companioned on the cross by two men, visible symbols of man, too, offered up in compensation. And all nature palpably shook in the same compensatory earthquake of suffering.

So we must learn to incorporate Catholic *ideas* into every manner of *reality*, to give pictures unmistakable to the world.

Repertory

(Continued from Page 20)

It was a feast. Midst munching and gasping they heard how Monsignor Spillane, President of the Catholic Summer School, had written a *carte blanche* for everything, bought out the company, lock, sock and buskin. The next day they were Cliff Haven bound, where they poached for the rest of the season, playing one night a week at Nabnasset in fulfillment of contract.

Arrangements at Cliff Haven were vastly superior. Financial troubles were removed, peanut butter sandwiches and stewed tomatoes outlawed. The troupe ate at the central dining hall, roomed in single and double rooms at the Brooklyn Cottage, and rehearsed in an old schoolhouse well off the beaten path. Unfortunately, however, with the new set-up the company had to be reduced. It was heart-breaking for those who were to leave, but it was for the good of the company, and they took it smiling.

The advent of the Blackfriars at Cliff Haven started things, principally havoc. The first week they were several times on the point of being forcibly ejected, on grounds of general and particular insanity. The second week the dining hall burned to the ground. Blackfriar conspiracy was hinted at. As the first flames licked up, the troupe was just returning from barn-storming in a neighborhood town. They clanged a few bells, aroused the sleeping citizenry, and went to work on a bucket brigade. Soon after, the United States Army fire apparatus roared in from nearby Plattsburg, where the war maneuvers were being held. When the Blackfriars and the Army got together, disaster was inevitable.

The next week the European crisis broke. Most commentators have missed the connection.

All in all, the Blackfriars had a grand summer. But it wasn't all play. The theatre may be based on the play, but it subsists on work. And those who labor in the theatre know this isn't just a play on words. It's work, hard, hard work, especially for those who break away from the "curse of the box-office" to strive after truth and beauty in the drama. It means sacrifice, it means slavish devotion to the cause, it means endless toil after the ideal. You give yourself up to the thing, cast yourself at the foot of the altar, and from then on the cause is all that matters. There's no question of rights and privileges, no thought of inconveniences, or hardships, not even any idea of heroism. There's no time for that. It's just work, work, work today—and tomorrow, *el dorado*—maybe.

That's what Catholic Theatre should mean. That's the only way it can succeed. Of course, the Blackfriars didn't attain this ideal perfectly and completely. They couldn't be expected to in this first summer. Next summer perhaps, or succeeding summers. But for the present, they have given us tangible prospects of greater things to come.

Puppetry

(Continued from Page 15)

exercises the memory. There comes a muscular development in the hands in learning to model and measure in proper proportion. And the will steels itself to a fine edge in being driven on to the point of completion of the work.

Thus far, this work yields like profit to all children. What more does it yield to the Catholic child? For his use, biographies of the saints have already been advocated. Is it not apparent that after a girl has concretized her heretofore hazy conception of the Blessed Virgin in a marionette, the Mother of God will take on greater reality in her life? When a boy has given material form to his mental picture of St. Joseph, will he not feel a closer union with this Foster Father of Christ? Does it not seem logical that when these children carve and saw and paint a definite background for their religious character and dramatize a definite religious truth or virtue, these characters and religious truths and virtues become more vital and worthwhile in their young minds?

In our modern reversion to paganism, it is a difficult task for our children to hold on to abstract religious principles and ideals which, to their immature minds, are remote and unreal, and often distasteful. These pre-adolescent boys and girls need their principles visualized. Godless Russia realizes this when she brands her anti-Christian principles on the minds of her children through the same means offered here—the Puppet Theatre.

What moral asset does puppetry offer to the family as a whole? Today, when one of the common reasons for family disintegration is due to the diversified interests of the family, puppetry gives an outlet for a common form of recreation within the home. It is a phase of recreation that stretches down from the pre-adolescent to the little folk, and up to the older brothers and sisters and the father and mother. The little ones on rainy, stay-indoors afternoons, will be content to sit

hour after hour, cutting and sewing rag puppets. The older brothers and Dad will want to help with the painting of scenery and attempt the construction of a stage for home use. Mother and her older daughters will want to try a hand at the costumes to give them a more artistic and finished look. Therefore, puppetry brings the whole family together again with common recreational interests.

Truly far-sighted Catholic parents understand that the narrowness of their own home is not the end for which they are raising their families. They train them with a two-fold end to which their home environment serves but as a means. One end is material and immediate; to contribute to the social betterment of the world outside. This end, in turn, becomes a means to the spiritual and ultimate union with the Beatific Vision. Puppetry, as we have seen, can serve as a means within reach of the average Catholic parent.

For the past two decades here in the United States professional groups have been contributing to the immediate end under the training and inspiration of Tony Sarg, and others. The Tatterman group has been working for about fifteen years under the direction of William Duncan and Edward Mabley. Besides these, there are over fifty other professional puppetry companies in the country.

Such is a brief outline of the secular contribution to the intellectual betterment of the people through the marionette theatre. Obviously, they have done nothing primarily for the spiritual growth of their audiences. To supply this greater need we must turn to the American Catholic youth of today.

From the pens of two French Catholic playwrights, Paul Claudel and Henri Gheon, have come representative Catholic morality, miracle, and mystery plays, constructed in keeping with the spirit of the medieval stage. Human actors have depicted these productions, but even in the best of human actors there is an obvious note of subjectivity and projection of the players' own individuality that spoil the illusion of other-worldliness which these mystical plays are meant to portray. It is to the marionette actor that the Catholic theatre lover may turn with the greatest confidence to find this spirit of detachment in its most perfect form; and the greater this spiritual detachment "gets across" to Catholic audiences in general, the greater will be its influence in character growth upon each member of the Catholic family.

Cycles

(Continued from Page 22)

these presented a play. The committee felt the presentation of plays on the general program should be confined to adult players. Very frankly, we entertained some misgivings as to the reaction of our audiences to high-school plays interspersed with the rather formidable lineup that was presented. The interest of the high schools in Catholic Play Cycles should of course be encouraged and it is possible that, if enough secondary schools were to respond, they might, under the sponsorship of the senior directorate, be able to produce their own cycle. There is the possibility of putting this on as a series of matinee performances to run concurrently with the cycle. This phase of the work is deserving of further study.

A careful budget of all probable expenses was prepared. This was rather difficult, there being no precedent by which to be guided, but the experience of the business managers of the various theatres proved valuable. When the probable amount of expense had been arrived at we knew how many tickets would have to be sold to finance the cycle. Each of the groups presenting plays was required to sell enough tickets to finance its own production plus an additional amount to help defray general and administrative expenses. The latter consisted of printing, postage, telephone, advertising, publicity, box office, and janitor services, etc.

Ready Now!

OLD WANG

(Play in Four Tableaux)

By

HENRI GHEON

Translated by Sister M. Constantia, B.V.M.

A touching story of Christian Charity as practiced by Old Wang, a Chinese boxer, toward his pupil Tschang Fou Tang, who during an uprising murdered Old Wang's entire family.

CAST: SEVEN MALES
SETS: SIMPLE DRAPES
PLAYING TIME: ONE HOUR
COSTUMES: CHINESE PEASANT
ROYALTY: \$5.00
SCRIPTS: TWENTY CENTS EACH

Write:

Secretary, Catholic Theatre Conference
THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, D. C.

The six charter member groups who did not present plays were also required to dispose of some tickets as their contribution to the general fund.

The price of admission was placed at 50 cents for individual performances and, there being six evenings of entertainment, a season ticket was sold for \$2.00. A semi-season ticket for \$1.00 was also available to students only, this entitling its holder to admission to any three performances. The admission prices proved to be a real bargain in entertainment and it is somewhat questionable as to whether they were not too low. Local conditions, of course, would have to regulate the prices of admission. Seats were not reserved as this was found to be impractical due to the fact that the individual organizations were widely scattered over the city. Since the average attendance was 500 and the seating capacity of Loyola Community Theatre, where the cycle was held, is 1,000, the "first come first served" policy entailed no particular obstacle.

The participating groups were allowed \$100 for production cost of full-length plays and \$40 for one-act plays. This amount was to include all costs including royalties, costume rental, makeup, etc. As all of the full-length plays had previously been produced, the stage sets were available and the cost consisted only of cartage. If any of the groups found they wanted to spend more than the amount allowed for production cost, they were at liberty to do so, but they were required to sell more tickets or were assessed to make up the excess. It might be interesting to mention that the dramatic directors of those groups whose directors receive a salary or fee donated their services for their cycle production. Neither was any fee paid to scenic designers or any members of the technical staffs.

Tickets for the cycle were distributed to the member groups by a committee who kept accurate accounts of all records of ticket charges and returns.

The publicity process employed consisted of printed circulars, posters, newspaper articles and pictures, and a small amount of paid advertising. The circulars were a simple single-fold sheet, prepared for mailing and containing an announcement of the plays, dates, and admission prices together with attractive photographs of three of the major productions. These were mailed or passed out by individual groups, the plan of distribution being left to their discretion.

A poster contest was held in which cash prizes and season ticket prizes were offered for the best designs submitted by high-school students. The response was good and some excellent poster designs were acquired.

The first prize-winning design was reproduced in two colors and these posters were distributed to the various schools and some business places. This phase of the advertising, including the prizes, engraving, and printing was found to be an expensive item and is of doubtful essential value, considering its cost.

An experienced press publicist was employed to prepare newspaper releases and to obtain photographic publicity. This man worked for three weeks preceding the first performance and for the first week of the cycle. His broad acquaintance in the newspaper offices and his arduous efforts and perseverance were responsible for some fine publicity, including lengthy articles and many fine pictures of the plays, players, directors, etc., in the metropolitan dailies and neighborhood papers. It is extremely doubtful that any amateur publicist would have had the time or determination to obtain the amount of publicity the Chicago Cycle received and, although the employment of a professional press agent will be found to be a not inexpensive item, it is heartily recommended.

Very little money was expended for paid advertising. This consisted merely of an announcement of the plays, dates, etc., in Chicago's arch diocesan weekly paper. In addition to the publicity outlined above there were many local announcements and articles in the programs or publications of the individual groups. There were also a number of articles appearing in Catholic papers and magazines which came out of the national headquarters of the Theatre Conference in Washington. Radio publicity is very difficult to obtain on the larger stations in large cities, but might be practical and valuable in smaller communities.

*The Catholic Theatre Conference
is Happy to Announce
Publication of*

"Savonarola"

A NEW PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

By

REV. URBAN NAGLE, O.P.

*Specially Reduced Royalty Rates are
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For Particulars Write to

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Catholic Theatre Conference

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
WASHINGTON, D. C.

The Production Committee's work was extremely important and it did a splendid job. The value of a well-organized perfectly coordinated service in this department cannot be too fully emphasized. The chairman of this committee was a man who had served on the production staff of Loyola Community Theatre and he was able to give the work all of his time, day and evening, for the duration of the cycle. A questionnaire was prepared and given to the dramatic directors. Their answers told the committee the details of their plays such as number and type of scenes, number of people in cast and other items of information. From this the production schedule was set up, dressing rooms assigned, time of rehearsals established, and an accurate itinerary of the moving in and out of scenery determined. These schedules were strictly adhered to and in this backstage problems that had seemed practically insurmountable were solved or minimized.

Plays were scheduled for alternate evenings such as Wednesday, Friday, Sunday, Tuesday, etc. No performances were held on Saturday. This staggering of dates gave the outgoing play a chance to strike its sets and have the stage cleared, the incoming play a chance to get its sets and lighting arranged and a dress rehearsal on the evening preceding their production. If this system is adopted and well directed it will assure the technical success of all productions. Each group brought its own technicians, property men, electricians, etc., and the production manager of the cycle was the only individual not belonging directly to that evening's staff who was allowed back stage during the performance.

A popular phase of the Chicago Cycle was the series of seminar discussions held on the evenings between plays. There were held not in the theatre, where dress rehearsals were occurring, but in a large rehearsal room, which proved to be ideal for the purpose. Speakers for these events were arranged for by the Program Committee and their topics were assigned and their time limited. Such a wide variety of subjects as "Catholic Poetry in the Theatre," "Founding a Parish Theatre," "Source Material for the Catholic Drama," and many other interesting topics were presented by good speakers, each experienced in his field.



Catholic Theatre

IS YOUR

Quarterly of the Dramatic Arts



It needs your support to continue as:

- The mouthpiece of the growing American Catholic Theatre Movement.
- A national medium for the statement of Catholic standards and ideals as applied to the stage.
- A channel of information concerning the achievements and objectives of Catholic drama groups.
- An outlet for the exploitation of new Catholic plays.



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| First Prize | \$100.00 |
| Second Prize | \$ 50.00 |
| Third Prize | \$ 25.00 |
| Fourth Prize | \$ 15.00 |
| Fifth Prize | \$ 10.00 |

CONTEST CLOSES JUNE 1, 1940

THEME: The death of two Oblate Fathers, Rev. Jean-Baptiste Rouviere,
O.M.I. (1881-1913) and Rev. Guillaume LeRoux, O.M.I. (1886-1913)
who were murdered in Northern Canada.



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